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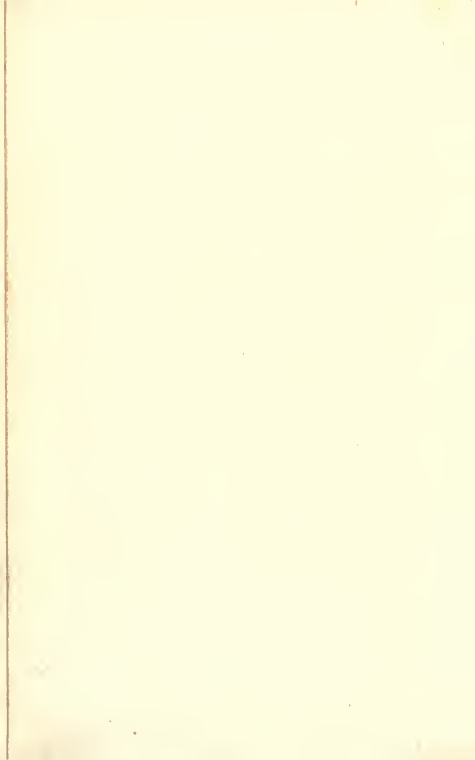


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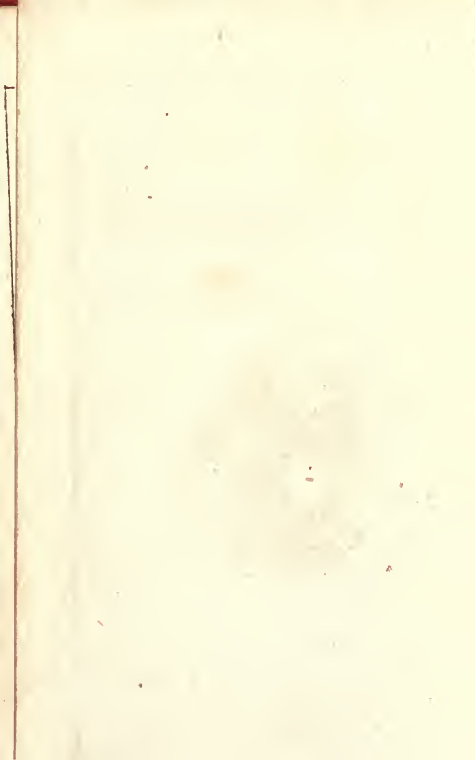
FRANKLIN ENTERING PHILADELPHIA.

LIFE OF
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.



NEW YORK:
CORNISH, LAMPORT & CO.
267 PEARL-STREET.
1851.

Hest



LIFE
OF
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

ON THE BASIS OF
HIS A'UTOBIOGRAPHY;
WITH ADDITIONS, BRINGING UP THE NARRATIVE
TO THE END OF HIS LIFE.

NEW YORK:
CORNISH, LAMPORT & CO
267 PEARL-STREET.
1851.

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P R E F A C E.

DR. FRANKLIN is known in history as the American philosopher and statesman. Brought up a printer, by industry, perseverance, and good conduct, he rose to the highest position in society; a first-rate rank among scientific men; and the office of ambassador from his country to foreign courts. In all his conduct in life, good sense was the prevailing characteristic. He never lost, when his higher destinies were fulfilled, the original simplicity and plainness of his manners, or the fine tone of benevolent feeling which marked his character as a boy. Of all the numerous biographies of Franklin which have appeared, none can bear com-

parison with that which he wrote himself ; and it is only to be regretted that he should have discontinued it so long before the close of his brilliant and eventful career. The reader will find it not only the most entertaining but the most useful of memoirs, since it points out the way in which modest merit may rise to distinction. Many and many are the men who have freely and openly attributed their whole success in life to an early perusal of Franklin's memoirs of himself.

We cordially hope that the present edition of this remarkable book may prove as useful as those which have preceded it. The conclusion of Franklin's Life in this volume, is of course by another hand. We hope and trust the additional facts may prove also interesting and useful to the reader.

LIFE OF,
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

I HAVE amused myself with collecting some little anecdotes of my family. You may remember the inquiries I made when you were with me in England, among such of my relations as were then living, and the journey I undertook for that purpose. To be acquainted with the particulars of my parentage and life, many of which are unknown to you, I flatter myself will afford the same pleasure to you as to me. I shall relate them upon paper; it will be an

agreeable employment of a week's uninterrupted leisure, which I promise myself during my present retirement in the country. There are also other motives which induce me to the undertaking. From the bosom of poverty and obscurity, in which I drew my first breath and spent my earliest years, I have raised myself to a state of opulence, and to some degree of celebrity in the world. A constant good fortune has attended me through every period of my life to my present advanced age; and my descendants may be desirous of learning what were the means of which I made use, and which, thanks to the assisting hand of Providence, have proved so eminently successful.

And here let me with all humility acknowledge, that to Divine Providence I am indebted for the felicity I have hitherto enjoyed. It is that power alone which has furnished me with the means I have employed, and that has crowned them with success. My faith in this respect leads me to hope, though I cannot count upon it, that the Divine goodness will still be exercised towards me, either by prolonging the duration of my happiness to the close of life, or by giving me fortitude to support any melancholy reverse which may happen to me as to so many others. My future fortune is unknown but to Him in whose hands is our destiny, and who can make our very afflictions subservient to our benefit.

One of my uncles, desirous, like myself, of collecting anecdotes of our family, gave me some notes, from which I have derived many particulars respecting our ancestors. From these I learn, that they had lived in the same village (Eaton, in Northamptonshire,) upon a freehold of about thirty acres, for the space at least of three hundred years. How they had resided there prior to that period, my uncle had been unable to discover; probably ever since the institution of surnames, when they took the appellation of Franklin, which had formerly been the name of a particular order of individuals.

This petty estate would not have sufficed for their subsistence, had they not added the trade of black-

smith, which was perpetuated in the family down to my uncle's time, the eldest son having been uniformly brought up to this employment; a custom which both he and my father observed with respect to their eldest sons.

In the researches I made at Eaton, I found no account of their births, marriages, and deaths, earlier than the year 1555, the parish register not extending farther back than that period. This register informed me, that I was the youngest son of the youngest branch of the family, counting five generations. My grandfather, Thomas, who was born in 1598, lived at Eaton till he was too old to continue his trade, when he retired to Banbury in Oxfordshire, where his son John,

who was a dyer, resided, and with whom my father was apprenticed. He died, and was buried there: we saw his monument in 1758. His eldest son lived in the family house at Eaton, which he bequeathed, with the land belonging to it, to his only daughter, who, in concert with her husband, Mr. Fisher, of Wellingborough, afterwards sold it to Mr. Ested, the present proprietor.

My grandfather had four surviving sons, Thomas, John, Benjamin, and Josias. I shall give you such particulars of them as my memory will furnish, not having my papers here, in which you will find a more minute account, if they are not lost during my absence.

Thomas had learned the trade of blacksmith under his father;

but possessing a good natural understanding, he improved it by study, at the solicitation of a gentleman of the name of Palmer, who was at that time the principal inhabitant of the village, and who encouraged, in like manner, all my uncles to improve their minds. Thomas thus rendered himself competent to the functions of a country attorney, soon became an essential personage in the affairs of the village, and was one of the chief movers of every public enterprise, as well relative to the country, as the town of Northampton. A variety of remarkable incidents were told us of him at Eaton. After enjoying the esteem and patronage of Lord Halifax, he died, January 6th, 1702, precisely

four years before I was born. The recital that was made us of his life and character, by some aged persons of the village, struck you, I remember, as extraordinary, from its analogy to what you knew of myself. "Had he died," said you, "just four years later, one might have supposed a transmigration of souls."

John, to the best of my belief, was brought up to the trade of a wool-dyer.

Benjamin served his apprenticeship in London to a silk-dyer. He was an industrious man: I remember him well; for, while I was a child, he joined my father at Boston, and lived for some years in the house with us. A particular affection had always subsisted be-

tween my father and him, and I was his god-son. He arrived to a great age. He left behind him two quarto volumes of poems in manuscript, consisting of little fugitive pieces, addressed to his friends. He had invented a short-hand, which he taught me, but having never made use of it, I have now forgotten it. He was a man of piety, and a constant attendant on the best preachers, whose sermons he took a pleasure in writing down, according to the expeditory method he had devised. Many volumes were thus collected by him. He was extremely fond of politics; too much so, perhaps, for his situation. I lately found, in London, a collection which he had made of all the principal pamphlets relative to

public affairs, from the year 1641 to 1717. Many volumes are wanting, as appears by the series of numbers; but there still remain eight in folio, and twenty-four in quarto and octavo. The collection had fallen into the hands of a second-hand bookseller, who knowing me, by having sold me some books, brought it to me. My uncle, it seems, had left it behind him on his departure for America, about fifty years ago. I found various notes of his writing in the margin.

Our humble family had early embraced the Reformation. They remained faithfully attached during the reign of Queen Mary, when they were in danger of being molested, on account of their zeal against Popery. They had an

English Bible, and, to conceal it the more securely, they conceived the project of fastening it open, with packthreads across the leaves, on the inside of the lid of a close-stool. When my great-grandfather wished to read to his family, he reversed the lid of the close-stool upon his knees, and passed the leaves from one side to the other, which were held down on each by the packthread. One of the children was stationed at the door, to give notice if he saw the proctor (an officer of the Spiritual Court) make his appearance: in that case, the lid was restored to its place, with the Bible concealed under it, as before.

The whole family preserved attachment to the Church of Eng-

land till towards the close of the reign of Charles II., when certain ministers, who had been ejected as non-conformists, having held conventicles in Northamptonshire, they were joined by Benjamin and Josias, who adhered to them ever after. The rest of the family continued in the Episcopal Church.

My father, Josias, married early in life. He went, with his wife and three children, to New England, about the year 1682. Conventicles being at that time prohibited by law, and frequently disturbed, some considerable persons of his acquaintance determined to go to America, where they hoped to enjoy the free exercise of their religion, and my father was prevailed on to accompany them.

My father had also, by the same wife, four children born in America, and ten others by a second wife, making in all seventeen. I remember to have seen thirteen seated together at his table, who all arrived to years of maturity, and were married. I was the last of the sons, and the youngest child excepting two daughters. I was born at Boston, in New England. My mother, the second wife, was Abiah Folger, daughter of Peter Folger, one of the first colonists of New England, of whom Cotton Mather makes honourable mention in his Ecclesiastical History of that province, as “a pious learned Englishman.”

My brothers were all put apprentice to different trades. With

respect to myself, I was sent, at the age of eight years, to a grammar school. My father destined me for the church, and already regarded me as the chaplain of the family. The promptitude with which, from my infancy, I had learned to read, for I do not remember to have been ever without this acquirement, and the encouragement of his friends, who assured him that I should one day certainly become a man of letters, confirmed him in this design. My uncle Benjamin approved also of the scheme, and promised to give me all his volumes of sermons, written, as I have said, in the short-hand of his invention, if I would take the pains to learn it.

I remained, however, scarcely a

year at grammar school, although, in this short interval, I had risen from the middle to the head of my class, from thence to the class immediately above, and was to pass, at the end of the year, to the one next in order. But my father, burthened with a numerous family, found that he was incapable, without subjecting himself to difficulties, of providing for the expense of a collegiate education; and considering, besides, as I heard him say to his friends, that persons so educated were often poorly provided for, he renounced his first intentions, took me from the grammar school, and sent me to a school for writing and arithmetic, kept by a Mr. George Brownwell, who was a skilful master, and

succeeded very well in his profession by employing gentle means only, and such as were calculated to encourage his scholars. Under him I soon acquired an excellent hand, but I failed in arithmetic, and made therein no great progress.

At ten years of age, I was called home, to assist my father in his occupation, which was that of soap-boiler and tallow-chandler, a business to which he had served no apprenticeship, but which he embraced on his arrival in New-England, because he found his own, that of a dyer, in too little request to enable him to maintain his family. I was, accordingly, employed in cutting the wicks, filling the moulds, taking care of the shop, carrying messages, &c.

This business displeased me, and I felt a strong inclination for a sea life ; but my father set his face against it. The vicinity of the water, however, gave me frequent opportunities of venturing myself both upon and within it, and I soon acquired the art of swimming and of managing a boat. When embarked with other children, the helm was commonly deputed to me, particularly on difficult occasions ; and, in every other project, I was almost always the leader of the troop, whom I sometimes involved in embarrassments. I shall give an instance of this, which demonstrates an early disposition of mind for public enterprises, though the one in question was not conducted by justice.

The mill-pond was terminated on one side by a marsh, upon the borders of which we were accustomed to take our stand, at high water, to angle for small fish. By dint of walking, we had converted the place into a perfect quagmire. My proposal was to erect a wharf that should afford us firm footing, and I pointed to my companions a large heap of stones, intended for building a new house near the marsh, and which were well adapted for our purpose. Accordingly, when the workmen retired in the evening, I assembled a number of my play-fellows, and by labouring diligently, like ants, sometimes four of us uniting our strength to carry a single stone, we removed them all, and constructed our little quay.

The workmen were surprised the next morning at not finding their stones, which had been conveyed to our wharf. Inquiries were made respecting the authors of this conveyance; we were discovered, complaints were exhibited against us, many of us underwent correction on the part of our parents, and though I strenuously defended the utility of the work, my father at length convinced me, that nothing which was not strictly honest, could be useful.

It will not, perhaps, be uninteresting to you to know what sort of a man my father was. He had an excellent constitution, was of a middle size, but well made and strong, and extremely active in whatever he undertook. He de-

signed with a degree of neatness, and knew a little of music. His voice was sonorous and agreeable, so that when he sung a psalm or hymn with accompaniment of his violin, as was his frequent practice in an evening, when the labours of the day were finished, it was truly delightful to hear him. He was versed also in mechanics, and could, upon occasion, use the tools of a variety of trades. But his greatest excellence was, a sound understanding and solid judgment in matters of prudence, both in public and private life. In the former, indeed, he never engaged, because his numerous family, and the mediocrity of his fortune, kept him unremittingly employed in the duties of his profession. But I very well

remember, that the leading men of the place used frequently to come and ask his advice respecting affairs of the town, or of the church to which he belonged, and that they paid much deference to his opinion. Individuals were also in the habit of consulting him in their private affairs, and he was often chosen arbiter between contending parties.

He was fond of having at his table, as often as possible, some friends or well-informed neighbours, capable of rational conversation, and he was always careful to introduce useful or ingenious topics of discourse which might tend to form the minds of his children. By this means, he early attracted our attention to what was just, prudent, and beneficial in the con-

duct of life. He never talked of the meats which appeared upon the table, never discussed whether they were well or ill dressed, of a good or bad flavour, high-seasoned or otherwise preferable or inferior to this or that dish of a similar kind. Thus, accustomed, from my infancy, to the utmost inattention as to these objects, I have always been perfectly regardless of what kind of food was before me ; and I pay so little attention to it, even now, that it would be a hard matter for me to recollect, a few hours after I had dined, of what my dinner had consisted. When travelling, I have often particularly experienced the advantage of this habit ; for it has often happened to me to be in company with persons

who, having a more delicate, because a more exercised taste, have suffered in many cases considerable inconvenience ; while, as to myself, I have had nothing to desire.

My mother was likewise possessed of an excellent constitution. She suckled all her ten children, and I never heard either her or my father complain of any other disorder than that of which they died ; my father at the age of eighty-seven, and my mother at eighty-five. They are buried at Boston, where a few years ago I placed a marble over their grave.

I continued employed in my father's trade for the space of two years ; that is to say, till I arrived at twelve years of age. About this time my brother John, who

had served his apprenticeship in London, having quitted my father, and being married and settled in business on his own account at Rhode Island, I was destined to all appearance to supply his place and be a candle-maker all my life: but my dislike of this occupation continuing, my father was apprehensive, that, if a more agreeable one were not offered me, I might play the truant and escape to sea; as, to his great mortification, my brother Josias had done. He therefore took me sometimes to see masons, coopers, braziers, joiners, and other mechanics, employed at their work, in order to discover the bent of my inclination, and fix it if he could upon some occupation that might retain me

on shore. I have since, in consequence of these visits, derived no small pleasure from seeing skilful workmen handle their tools ; and it has proved of considerable benefit, to have acquired thereby sufficient knowledge to be able to make little things for myself, when I have had no mechanic at hand, and to construct small machines for my experiments, while the idea I have conceived has been fresh and strongly impressed on my imagination.

My father at length decided that I should be a cutler, and I was placed for some days upon trial with my cousin Samuel, son of my uncle Benjamin, who had learned his trade in London, and had established himself at Boston.

But the premium he required for my apprenticeship displeasing my father, I was recalled home.

From my earliest years I had been passionately fond of reading, and laid out in books all the money I could procure. I was particularly pleased with accounts of voyages. My first acquisition was Bunyan's collection in small separate volumes. These I afterwards sold in order to buy an historical collection which consisted of small cheap volumes, amounting in all to about forty or fifty. My father's little library was principally made up of books of practical and polemical theology. I read the greatest part of them. I have since often regretted, that at that time when I had so great a thirst

for knowledge, more eligible books had not fallen into my hands, as it was then a point decided that I should not be educated for the church. There was also among my father's books Plutarch's Lives, in which I read continually, and I still regard as advantageously employed the time I devoted to them. I found besides a work of De Fou's, entitled, an Essay on Projects, from which, perhaps, I derived impressions that have since influenced some of the principal events of my life.

My inclination for books at last determined my father to make me a printer, though he had already a son in that profession. My brother had returned from England in 1717, with a press and types, in

order to establish a printing-house at Boston. This business pleased me much better than that of my father, though I had still a predilection for the sea. To prevent the effects which might result from this inclination, my father was impatient to see me engaged with my brother. I held back for some time ; at length however I suffered myself to be persuaded, and signed my indentures, being then only twelve years of age. It was agreed that I should serve as apprentice to the age of twenty-one, and should receive journeymen's wages only during the last year.

In a very short time I made great proficiency in this business, and became very serviceable to my brother. I had now an op-



FRANKLIN READING BY HIS BEDSIDE.



portunity of procuring better books. The acquaintance I necessarily formed with booksellers' apprentices, enabled me to borrow a volume now and then, which I never failed to return punctually and without injury. How often has it happened to me to pass the greater part of the night in reading by my bed-side, when the book had been lent me in the evening, and was to be returned the next morning, lest it might be missed or wanted!

At length, Matthew Adams, an ingenious tradesman, who had a handsome collection of books, and who frequented our printing-house, took notice of me. He invited me to see his library, and had the goodness to lend me any books I

was desirous of reading. I then took a strange fancy for poetry, and composed several little pieces. My brother, thinking he might find his account in it, encouraged me, and engaged me to write two ballads. One, called the Light-house Tragedy, containing an account of the shipwreck of Captain Worthilake and his two daughters; the other was a sailor's song on the capture of the noted pirate called Black-Beard. They were wretched verses in point of style, mere blind-man's ditties. When printed he despatched me about the town to sell them. The first had a prodigious run, because the event was recent and had made a great noise.

My vanity was flattered by this success; but my father checked

my exultation, by ridiculing my productions, and telling me that versifiers were always poor. I thus escaped the misfortune of being probably a very wretched poet.

There was in the town another young man, a great lover of books, of the name of John Collins, with whom I was intimately connected. We frequently engaged in dispute, and were indeed so fond of argumentation, that nothing was so agreeable to us as a war of words. This contentious temper, I would observe by the bye, is in danger of becoming a very bad habit, and frequently renders a man's company insupportable, as being no otherwise capable of indulgence than by indiscriminate-contradic-

tion. Independently of the acrimony and discord it introduces into conversation, it is often productive of dislike, and even hatred, between persons to whom friendship is indispensably necessary. I acquired it by reading, while I lived with my father, in books of religious controversy. I have since remarked, that men of sense and good education seldom fall into this error.

When about sixteen years of age, a work of Tryon fell into my hands, in which he recommends vegetable diet. I determined to observe it. My brother, being a bachelor, did not keep house, but boarded with his apprentices in a neighbouring family. My refusing to eat animal food was found inconvenient, and I

was often scolded for my singularity. I attended to the mode in which Tryon prepared some of his dishes, particularly how to boil potatoes and rice, and make hasty puddings. I then said to my brother, that if he would allow me per week half what he paid for my board, I would undertake to maintain myself. The offer was instantly embraced, and I soon found that of what he gave me, I was able to save half. This was a new fund for the purchase of books, and other advantages resulted to me from the plan. When my brother and his workmen left the printing-house to go to dinner, I remained behind, and despatched my frugal meal, which frequently consisted of a biscuit only, or a slice of bread and a bunch of

raisins, or a bun from the pastry cook's, with a glass of water; I had the rest of the time, till their return, for study, and my progress therein was proportioned to that clearness of ideas, and quickness of conception, which are the fruit of temperance in eating and drinking.

It was about this period that, having one day been put to the blush for my ignorance in the art of calculation, which I had twice failed to learn while at school, I took up Cocker's Treatise of Arithmetic, and went through it by myself with the greatest ease; I also read a book of navigation, by Seller and Sturmy, and made myself master of the little geometry it contains; but I never proceeded

far in this science. Nearly at the same time, I read Locke on the Human Understanding, and the Art of Thinking, by Messrs. Du Port-Royal.

While labouring to form and improve my style I met with an English Grammar, which I believe was Greenwood's, having at the end of it two little essays on rhetoric and logic. In the latter I found a model of disputation after the manner of Socrates. Shortly after I procured Xenophon's work, entitled, Memorable Things of Socrates, in which are various examples of the same method. Charmed to a degree of enthusiasm with this mode of disputing, I adopted it, and renouncing blunt contradiction, and direct and positive argument,

I assumed the character of an humble questioner. I found Socrates's method to be both the safest for myself, as well as the most embarrassing to those against whom I employed it. It soon afforded me singular pleasure: I incessantly practised it, and became very adroit in obtaining, even from persons of superior understanding, concessions of which they did not foresee the consequences. Thus I involved them in difficulties from which they were unable to extricate themselves, and sometimes obtained victories, which neither my cause nor my arguments merited.

In 1720, or 1721, my brother began to print a new public paper. It was the second that made its

appearance in America, and was entitled "The New England Courant." The only one that existed before was the "Boston News-Letter." Some of his friends, I remember, would have dissuaded him from this undertaking, as a thing that was not likely to succeed; a single newspaper being, in their opinion, sufficient for all America. At present, however, in 1777, there are no less than twenty-five. But he carried his project into execution, and I was employed in distributing the copies to his customers, after having assisted in composing and working them off.

Among his friends he had a number of literary characters, who, as an amusement, wrote short essays for the paper, which gave it

reputation and increased its sale. These gentlemen came frequently to our house. I heard the conversation that passed, and the accounts they gave of the favourable reception of their writings with the public. I was tempted to try my hand among them; but, being still a child as it were, I was fearful that my brother might be unwilling to print in his paper any performance of which he should know me to be the author. I therefore contrived to disguise my hand, and having written an anonymous piece, I placed it at night under the door of the printing-house, where it was found the next morning. My brother communicated it to his friends, when they came as usual to see him, who read it, commented

upon it within my hearing, and I had the exquisite pleasure to find that it met with approbation, and that, in the various conjectures they made respecting the author, no one was mentioned who did not enjoy a high reputation in the country for talents and genius. I now supposed myself fortunate in my judges, and began to suspect that they were not such excellent writers as I had hitherto supposed them. Be that as it may, encouraged by this little adventure, I wrote and sent to the press, in the same way, many other pieces, which were equally approved; keeping the secret till my slender stock of information and knowledge for such performances was completely exhausted, when I made myself known.

My brother, upon this discovery, began to entertain a little more respect for me ; but he still regarded himself as my master, and treated me like an apprentice. He thought himself entitled to the same services from me as from any other person. On the contrary, I conceived that in many instances, he was too rigorous, and that, on the part of a brother, I had a right to expect greater indulgence. Our disputes were frequently brought before my father, and either my brother was generally in the wrong, or I was the better pleader of the two, for judgment was commonly given in my favour. But my brother was passionate, and often had recourse to blows ; a circumstance which I took in very ill

part. This severe and tyrannical treatment contributed, I believe, to imprint on my mind that aversion to arbitrary power, which during my whole life I have ever preserved. My apprenticeship became insupportable to me, and I continually sighed for an opportunity of shortening it, which at length unexpectedly offered.

An article inserted in our paper, upon some political subject which I have now forgotten, gave offence to the assembly. My brother was taken into custody, censured, and ordered into confinement for a month, because, as I presume, he would not discover the author. I was also taken up, and examined before the council; but, though I gave them no satisfaction, they

contented themselves with reprimanding, and then dismissed me; considering me, probably, as bound, in quality of apprentice, to keep my master's secrets.

The imprisonment of my brother kindled my resentment, notwithstanding our private quarrels. During its continuance, the management of the paper was entrusted to me, and I was bold enough to insert some pasquindes against the governors, which highly pleased my brother, while others began to look upon me in an unfavourable point of view, considering me as a young wit, inclined to satire and lampoon.

My brother's enlargement was accompanied with an arbitrary order from the House of Assembly,

“That James Franklin should no longer print the newspaper entitled, *The New England Courant*.” In this conjuncture, we held a consultation of our friends, at the printing-house, in order to determine what was proper to be done. Some proposed to evade the order, by changing the title of the paper; but my brother foreseeing inconveniences that would result from this step, thought it better that it should in future be printed in the name of Benjamin Franklin; and to avoid the censure of the Assembly, who might charge him with printing the paper himself, under the name of his apprentice, it was resolved that my old indentures should be given up to me, with a full and entire discharge written on

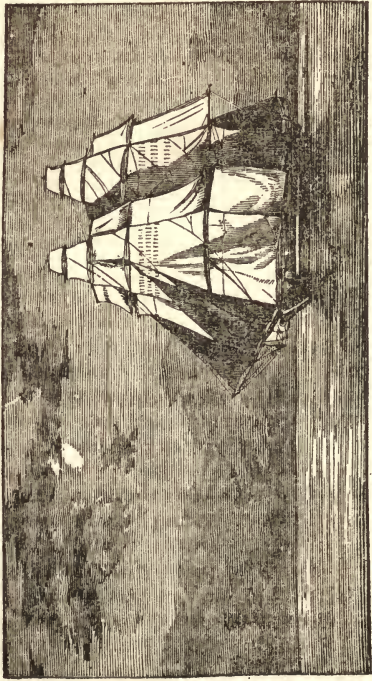
the back, in order to be produced upon an emergency ; but that, to secure to my brother the benefit of my service, I should sign a new contract, which should be kept secret during the remainder of the term. This was a very shallow arrangement. It was, however, carried into immediate execution, and the paper continued, in consequence, to make its appearance for some months in my name. At length, a new difference arising between my brother and me, I ventured to take advantage of my liberty, presuming that he would not dare to produce the new contract. It was undoubtedly dishonourable to avail myself of this circumstance, and I reckon this action as one of the first errors of

my life ; but I was little capable of estimating it at its true value, embittered as my mind had been by the recollection of the blows I had received. Exclusively of his passionate treatment of me, my brother was by no means a man of an ill temper, and perhaps my manners had too much of impertinence not to afford it a very natural pretext.

When he knew that it was my determination to quit him, he wished to prevent my finding employment elsewhere. He went to all the printing-houses in the town, and prejudiced the masters against me, who accordingly refused to employ me. The idea then suggested itself to me of going to New York, the nearest town in which there was a printing-office.

Farther reflections confirmed me in the design of leaving Boston, where I had already rendered myself an object of suspicion to the governing party. It was probable, from the arbitrary proceedings of the Assembly in the affair of my brother, that, by remaining, I should soon have been exposed to difficulties, which I had the greater reason to apprehend, as, from my indiscreet disputes upon the subject of religion, I begun to be regarded by pious souls with horror, either as an apostate or an atheist. I came, therefore, to a resolution; but my father, in this instance, siding with my brother, I presumed that if I attempted to depart openly, measures would be taken to prevent me. My friend Collins undertook





FRANKLIN'S VOYAGE TO NEW YORK.

to favour my flight. He agreed for my passage with the captain of a New York sloop, to whom he represented me as a young man of his acquaintance, who had an affair with a girl of bad character, whose parents wished to compel me to marry her, and that, of consequence, I could neither make my appearance nor go off publicly. I sold part of my books to procure a small sum of money, and went privately on board the sloop. By favour of a good wind, I found myself in three days at New York, nearly three hundred miles from my home, at the age only of seventeen years, without knowing an individual in the place, and with very little money in my pocket.

The inclination I had felt for a

seafaring life was entirely subsided, or I should now have been able to gratify it ; but having another trade, and believing myself to be a tolerable workman, I hesitated not to offer my services to the old Mr. William Bradford, who had been the first printer in Pennsylvania, but had quitted that province on account of a quarrel with George Keith, the governor. He could not give me employment himself, having little to do, and already as many hands as he wanted ; but he told me that his son, a printer at Philadelphia, had lately lost his principal workman, Aquila Rose, who was dead, and that if I would go thither, he believed that he would engage me. Philadelphia was one hundred miles farther. I hesitated

not to embark, in a boat in order to repair by the shortest cut of the sea to Amboy, leaving my trunk and effects to come after me by the usual and more tedious conveyance. In crossing the bay we met with a squall, which shattered to pieces our rotten sails, prevented us from entering the Kill, and threw us upon Long-Island.

During the squall, a drunken Dutchman, who, like myself, was a passenger in the boat, fell into the sea; I seized him by the fore-top, saved him and drew him on board. This immersion sobered him a little, so that he fell asleep, after having taken from his pocket a volume, which he requested me to dry. This volume I found to be my old favourite work, Bunyan's

Voyages, in Dutch, a beautiful impression on fine paper, with copperplate engravings, a dress in which I had never seen it in its original language. I have since learned, that it has been translated into almost all the languages of Europe, and, next to the Bible, I am persuaded it is one of the books which has had the greatest spread. Honest John is the first that I know of who has mixed narrative and dialogue together; a mode of writing very engaging to the reader, who, in the most interesting passages, finds himself admitted, as it were, into the company, and present at the conversation. De Foe has imitated it with success in his Robinson Crusoe, his Moll Flanders, and other works.

In approaching the island we found that we had made a part of the coast where it was not possible to land, on account of the strong breakers. produced by the rocky shore. We cast anchor, and veered the cable toward the shore. Some men, who stood upon the brink, hallooed to us, while we did the same on our part; but the wind was so high, and the waves so noisy, that we could neither of us hear each other. There were some canoes upon the bank, and we called out to them, and made signs to prevail on them to come and take us up; but either they did not understand us, or they deemed our request impracticable, and with drew. Night came on, and nothing remained for us but to

wait the subsiding of the wind; till when we determined, that is, the pilot and I, to sleep if possible. For that purpose, we went below the hatches, along with the Dutchman, who was drenched with water. The sea broke over the boat, and reached us in our retreat, so that we are presently as completely drenched as he.

We had very little repose during the whole night; but the wind abating the next day, we succeeded in reaching Amboy before it was dark, after having passed thirty hours without provisions, and with no other drink than a bottle of bad rum, the water upon which we rowed being salt. In the evening I went to bed with a very violent fever. I had somewhere read that

cold water, drank plentifully, was a remedy in such cases. I followed the prescription, was in a profuse sweat for the greater part of the night, and the fever left me. The next day I crossed the river in a ferryboat, and continued my journey on foot. I had fifty miles to walk, in order to reach Burlington, where I was told I should find passage-boats that would convey me to Philadelphia. It rained hard the whole day, so that I was wet to the skin. Finding myself fatigued about noon, I stopped at a paltry inn, where I passed the rest of the day, and the whole night, beginning to regret that I had quit-
ted my home. I made, besides, so wretched a figure, that I was suspected to be some run-away ser-

vant. This I discovered by the questions that were asked me, and I felt that I was every moment in danger of being taken up as such. The next day, however, I continued my journey, and arrived in the evening at an inn, eight or ten miles from Burlington, that was kept by one Dr. Brown.

This man entered into conversation with me, while I took some refreshment, and perceiving that I had read a little, he expressed towards me considerable interest and friendship. Our acquaintance continued during the remainder of his life. I believe him to have been what is called an itinerant doctor, for there was no town in England, or indeed in Europe, of which he could not give a particular

account. I spent the night here, and reached Burlington the next morning. On my arrival, I had the mortification to learn, that the ordinary passage-boats had sailed a little before. This was on a Saturday, and there would be no other till the Tuesday following. I returned to the house of an old woman in the town, who had sold me some gingerbread to eat on my passage, and I asked her advice. She invited me to take up my abode with her till an opportunity offered for me to embark. Fatigued with having travelled so far on foot, I accepted her invitation. When she understood that I was a printer, she would have persuaded me to stay at Burlington, and set up my trade, but she was little

aware of the capital that would be necessary for such a purpose. I was treated, while at her house, with true hospitality. She gave me, with the utmost good-will, a dinner of beef-steaks, and would accept of nothing in return but a pint of ale.

Here I imagined myself to be fixed till the Tuesday in the ensuing week ; but walking out in the evening, by the river side, I saw a boat, with a number of persons in it, approach. It was, going to Philadelphia, and the company took me in. As there was no wind, we could only make way with our oars. About midnight, not perceiving the town, some of the company were of opinion that we must have passed it, and were un-

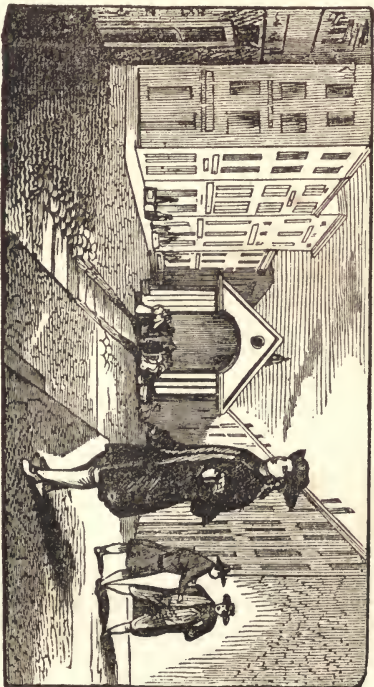
willing to row any farther, the rest not knowing where we were, it was resolved that we should stop. We drew towards the shore, entered a creek, and landed near some old palisades, which served us for firewood, it being a cold night in October. Here we stayed till day, when one of the company found the place in which we were to be Cooper's Creek, a little above Philadelphia, which in reality we perceived the moment we were out of the creek. We arrived on Sunday about eight or nine o'clock in the morning, and landed on Market Street wharf.

I have entered into the particulars of my voyage, and shall, in like manner, describe my first entrance into this city, that you may be able to compare beginnings so little aus-

picious, with the figure I have since made.

On my arrival at Philadelphia, I was in my working-dress, my best clothes being to come by sea. I was covered with dirt, my pockets were filled with shirts and stockings, I was unacquainted with a single soul in the place, and knew not where to seek for a lodging. Fatigued with walking, rowing, and having passed the night without sleep, I was extremely hungry, and all my money consisted of a Dutch dollar, and about a shilling's worth of coppers, which I gave to the boatmen for my passage. As I had assisted them in rowing, they refused it at first, but I insisted on their taking it. A man is sometimes more generous when he has

FRANKLIN ENTERING PHILADELPHIA.





little, than when he has much money, probably because, in the first case, he is desirous of concealing his poverty.

I walked towards the top of the street, looking eagerly on both sides, till I came to Market street, where I met a child with a loaf of bread. Often had I made my dinner on dry bread. I inquired where he had bought it, and went straight to the baker's shop which he pointed out to me. I asked for some biscuits, expecting to find such as we had at Boston ; but they made, it seems, none of that sort in Philadelphia—I then asked for a three-penny loaf; they made no loaves of that price. Finding myself ignorant of the prices as well as of the different kinds of bread, I de-

sired him to let me have three-penny worth of bread of some kind or other. He gave me three large rolls. I was surprised at receiving so much ; I took them, however, and having no room in my pockets, I walked on with a roll under each arm, eating the third. In this manner I went through Market street to Fourth street, and passed the house of Mr. Read, the father of my future wife. She was standing at the door, observed me, and thought with reason, that I made a very singular and grotesque appearance.

I then turned the corner, and went through Chesnut street, eating my roll all the way ; and having made this round, I found myself again on Market street wharf, near

the boat in which I had arrived. I stepped into it to take a draught of river-water, and finding myself satisfied with my first roll, I gave the other two to a woman and her child, who had come down the river with us in the boat, and was waiting to continue her journey. Thus refreshed, I regained the street, which was now full of well dressed people, all going the same way. I joined them, and was thus led to a large Quaker meeting-house, near the market-place. I sat down with the rest, and after looking round me for some time, hearing nothing said, and being drowsy from my last night's labour and want of rest, I fell into a sound sleep. In this state I continued till the assembly dispersed, when one of the congre-

gation had the goodness to wake me. This was, consequently, the first house I entered, or in which I slept at Philadelphia.

I began again to walk along the streets by the river side, and looking attentively in the face of every one I met, I at length perceived a young Quaker, whose countenance pleased me. I accosted him, and begged him to inform me where a stranger might find a lodging. We were then near the sign of the Three Mariners. They receive travellers here, said he, but it is not a house that bears a good character ; if you will go with me, I will show you a better one. He conducted me to the Crooked Billet in Water street. There I ordered something for dinner, and during my meal, a

number of curious questions were put to me ; my youth and appearance exciting the suspicion of my being a run-away. After dinner my drowsiness returned, and I threw myself upon a bed without taking off my clothes, and slept till six in the evening, when I was called to supper. I afterwards went to bed at a very early hour, and did not wake till the next morning.

As soon as I got up, I put myself in as decent a trim as I could, and went to the house of Andrew Bradford, the printer. I found his father in the shop, whom I had seen at New York. Having travelled on horseback, he had arrived at Philadelphia before me. He introduced me to his son, who received me

with civility, and gave me some breakfast; but told me he had no occasion for a journeyman, having lately procured one. He added, that there was another printer newly settled in the town, of the name of Keimer, who might perhaps employ me; and in case of a refusal, I should be welcome to lodge at his house, and he would give me a little work now and then, till something better should offer.

The old man offered to introduce me to the new printer. When we were at his house, "Neighbour, (said he) I bring you a young man in the printing business, perhaps you may have need of his services." Keimer asked me some questions, put a composing-stick in my hand to see how I could work, and then

said, that at present he had nothing for me to do, but that he should soon be able to employ me. At the same time, taking old Bradford for an inhabitant of the town well disposed towards him, he communicated his project to him, and the prospect he had of success. Bradford was careful not to discover that he was the father of the other printer; and from what Keimer had said, that he hoped shortly to be in possession of the greater part of the business of the town, led him, by artful questions, and by starting some difficulties, to disclose all his views, what his hopes were founded upon, and how he intended to proceed. I was present, and heard it all. I instantly saw that one of the two was a cunning old

fox, and the other a perfect novice. Bradford left me with Keimer, who was strangely surprised when I informed him who the old man was.

I found Keimer's printing materials to consist of an old damaged press, and a small font of worn-out English letters, with which he was himself at work upon an Elegy on Aquila Rose, whom I have mentioned above, an ingenious young man, and of an excellent character, highly esteemed in the town, secretary to the assembly, and a very tolerable poet. Keimer also made verses, but they were indifferent ones. He could not be said to write in verse, for his method was, to take and set the lines as they flowed from his muse ; and, as he worked without copy, had

but one set of letter-cases, and the elegy would probably occupy all his type, it was impossible for any one to assist him. I endeavoured to put his press in order, which he had not yet used, and of which indeed he understood nothing; and having promised to come and work off his elegy as soon as it should be ready, I returned to the house of Bradford, who gave me some trifle to do for the present, for which I had my board and lodging.

In a few days Keimer sent for me to print off his elegy. He had now procured another set of letter-cases, and had a pamphlet to reprint, upon which he set me to work. He could not endure that, I should lodge at Bradford's. He had indeed a house, but it was unfurnished, so

that he could not take me in. He procured me a lodging at Mr. Read's, his landlord, whom I have already mentioned. My trunk and effects being now arrived, I thought of making, in the eyes of Miss Read, a more respectable appearance than when chance exhibited me to her view, eating my roll, and wandering in the streets.

From this period I began to contract acquaintance with such young people of the town as were fond of reading, and spent my evenings with them agreeably, while at the same time, I gained money by my industry, and, thanks to my frugality, lived contented. I thus forgot Boston as much as possible, and wished every one to be ignorant of the place of my

residence, except my friend Collins, to whom I wrote, and who kept my secret.

An incident however occurred, which sent me home sooner than I had proposed. I had a brother-in-law, of the name of Robert Holmes, master of a trading sloop from Boston to Delaware. Being at Newcastle, forty miles below Philadelphia, he heard of me, and wrote to inform me of the chagrin which my sudden departure from Boston had occasioned my parents, and of the affection which they still entertained for me, assuring me that, if I would return, everything should be adjusted to my satisfaction; and he was very pressing in his entreaties. I answered his letter, thanked him for

his advice, and explained the reasons which had induced me to quit Boston, with such force and clearness, that he was convinced I had been less to blame than he had imagined.

Sir William Keith,* governor of the province, was at Newcastle at the time. Captain Holmes, being by chance in his company when he received my letter, took occasion to speak of me, and showed it him. The governor read it, and appeared surprised when he learned my age. He thought me, he said, a young man of very promising talents, and that, of consequence, I ought to be encouraged; that there were at Philadelphia none but very ignorant printers, and that if I were to set up for myself, he had

no doubt of my success ; that, for his own part, he would procure me all the public business, and would render me every other service in his power. My brother-in-law related all this to me afterwards at Boston, but I knew nothing of it at the time ; when one day, Keimer and I being at work together near the window, we saw the governor and another gentleman, Colonel French, of Newcastle, handsomely dressed, cross the street, and make directly for our house. We heard them at the door, and Keimer, believing it to be a visit to himself, went immediately down ; but the governor inquired for me, came up stairs, and with a condescension and politeness to which I had not at all been accustomed, paid me many

compliments, desired to be acquainted with me, obligingly reproached me for not having made myself known to him on my arrival in the town, and wished me to accompany him to a tavern, where he and Colonel French were going to taste some excellent Madeira wine.

I was, I confess, somewhat surprised, and Kemmer appeared thunderstruck. I went, however, with the governor and the colonel to a tavern at the corner of Third street, where, while we were drinking the Madeira, he proposed to me to establish a printing-house. He set forth the probabilities of success, and himself and Colonel French assured me, that I should have their protection and influence in obtaining the printing of the pub-

lic papers of both governments; and as I appeared to doubt whether my father would assist me in this enterprise, Sir William said that he would give me a letter to him, in which he would represent the advantages of the scheme in a light which he had no doubt would determine him. It was thus concluded, that I should return to Boston by the first vessel, with the letter of recommendation from the governor to my father. Meanwhile the project was to be kept secret, and I continued to work for Keimer as before.

The governor sent every now and then to invite me to dine with him. I considered this as a very great honour, and I was the more sensible of it, as he conversed with

me in the most affable, familiar, and friendly manner imaginable.

Towards the end of April, 1724, a small vessel was ready to sail for Boston. I took leave of Keimer, upon the pretext of going to see my parents. The governor gave me a long letter, in which he said many flattering things of me to my father, and strongly recommended the project of my settling at Philadelphia, as a thing which could not fail to make my fortune.

Going down the bay, we struck on a flat, and sprung a leak. The weather was very tempestuous, and we were obliged to pump without intermission; I took my turn. We arrived, however, safe and sound at Boston, after about a fortnight's passage.

I had been absent seven complete months, and my relations, during that interval, had received no intelligence of me, for my brother-in-law, Holmes, was not yet returned, and had not written about me. My unexpected appearance surprised the family, but they were all delighted at seeing me again, and, except my brother, welcomed me home. I went to him at the printing-office. I was better dressed than I had ever been while in his service; I had a complete suit of clothes, new and neat, a watch in my pocket, and my purse was furnished with nearly five pounds sterling in money. He gave me no very civil reception, and having eyed me from head to foot, resumed his work.

The workmen asked me with eagerness where I had been, what sort of a country it was, and how I liked it. I spoke in the highest terms of Philadelphia, the happy life we led there, and expressed my intention of going back again. One of them asked what sort of money we had ; I displayed before them a handful of silver, which I drew from my pocket. This was a curiosity to which they were not accustomed, paper being the current money at Boston. I failed not after this to let them see my watch ; and at last, my brother continuing sullen and out of humour, I gave them a shilling to drink, and took my leave. This visit stung my brother to the soul, for when, shortly after, my mother spoke to him of

a reconciliation, and a desire of seeing us upon good terms, he told her that I had so insulted him before his men, that he never would forget or forgive it; in this, however, he was mistaken.

The governor's letter appeared to excite in my father some surprise, but he said little. After some days, Captain Holmes being returned, he showed it him, asking him if he knew Keith, and what sort of a man he was; adding, that, in his opinion, it proved very little discernment to think of setting up a boy in business, who for three years to come would not be of an age to be ranked in the class of men. Holmes said everything he could in favour of the scheme; but my father firmly maintained

its absurdity, and at last gave a positive refusal. He wrote, however, a civil letter to Sir William, thanking him for the protection he had so obligingly offered me, but refusing to assist me for the present, because he thought me too young to be intrusted with the conduct of so important an enterprise, and which would require so considerable a sum of money.

My old comrade Collins, who was a clerk in the post-office, charmed with the account I gave of my new residence, expressed a desire of going thither; and, while I waited my father's determination, he set off before me, by land, for Rhode Island, leaving his books, which formed a handsome collection in mathematics and natural

philosophy, to be conveyed with mine to New York, where he purposed to wait for me.

My father, though he could not approve Sir William's proposal, was yet pleased that I had obtained so advantageous a recommendation as that of a person of his rank; and that my industry and economy had enabled me to equip myself so handsomely in so short a period. Seeing no appearance of accommodating matters between my brother and me, he consented to my return to Philadelphia, advised me to be civil to every body, to endeavour to obtain general esteem, and avoid satire and sarcasm, to which he thought I was too much inclined; adding, that with perseverance and prudent economy, I

might, by the time I became of age, save enough to establish myself in business; and that if a small sum should then be wanting, he would undertake to supply it.

This was all I could obtain from him, except some trifling presents, in token of friendship, from him and my mother. I embarked once more for New York, furnished at this time with their approbation and blessing. The sloop having touched at Newport, in Rhode Island, I paid a visit to my brother John, who had for some years been settled there, and was married. He had always been attached to me, and received me with great affection. One of his friends, whose name was Vernon, having a debt of about thirty-six pounds

due to him in Pennsylvania, begged me to receive it for him, and keep the money till I should hear from him; accordingly he gave me an order for that purpose. This affair occasioned me, in the sequel, much uneasiness.

At Newport we took on board a number of passengers, among whom were two young women, and a grave and sensible Quaker lady, with her servants. I had shown an obliging forwardness in rendering the Quaker some trifling services, which led her, probably, to feel some interest in my welfare; for when she saw a familiarity take place, and every day increase, between the two young women and me, she took me aside, and said, "Young man, I am in pain

for thee. Thou hast no parent to watch over thy conduct, and thou seemest to be ignorant of the world, and the snares to which youth is exposed. Rely upon, what I tell thee; these are women of bad characters; I perceive it in all their actions. If thou dost not take care, they will lead thee into danger. They are strangers to thee, and I advise thee, by the friendly interest I take in thy preservation, to form no connexion with them." As I appeared at first not to think quite so ill of them as she did, she related many things she had seen and heard, which had escaped my attention, but which convinced me she was in the right. I thanked her for her advice, and promised to follow it.

When we arrived at New York, they informed me where they lodged, and invited me to come and see them. I did not, however, go, and it was well I did not ; for, the next day, the captain missing a silver spoon, and some other things which had been taken from the cabin, and knowing these women to be prostitutes, procured a search warrant, found the stolen goods upon them, and had them punished. And thus, after having been saved from one rock concealed under water, upon which the vessel had struck during our passage, I escaped another of a still more dangerous nature.

At New York I found my friend Collins, who had arrived some time before. We had been intimate from our infancy, and had the

same books together ; but he had the advantage of being able to devote more time to reading and study, and an astonishing disposition for mathematics, in which he left me far behind. When at Boston, I had been accustomed to pass with him almost all my leisure hours. He was then a sober and industrious lad ; his knowledge had gained him a very general esteem, and he seemed to promise to make an advantageous figure in society. But, during my absence he had unfortunately addicted himself to brandy, and I learned, as well from himself as from the report of others, that every day since his arrival at New York he had been intoxicated, and had acted in a very extravagant manner. He had also played, and lost all his





GOVERNOR BURNETT SHOWING FRANKLIN HIS LIBRARY.

money, so that I was obliged to pay all his expenses at the inn, and to maintain him during the rest of the journey; a burden that was very inconvenient to me.

The Governor of New York, whose name was Burnet, hearing the captain say that a young man who was a passenger in the ship had a great number of books, begged him to bring me to his house. I accordingly went, and should have taken Collins with me had he been sober. The governor treated me with great civility, showed me his library, which was a very considerable one, and we talked for some time upon books and authors. This was the second governor who had honoured me with his attention; and to a poor boy, as I then was,

these little adventures did not fail to be pleasing.

We arrived at Philadelphia. On the way I received Vernon's money, without which we should have been unable to have finished our journey.

Collins wished to get employment as a merchant's clerk, but either his breath or his countenance betrayed his bad habit ; for though he had recommendations, he met with no success, and continued to eat and lodge with me at my expense. Knowing that I had Vernon's money, he was continually asking me to lend him some of it, promising to repay me as soon as he should get employment. At last, he had drawn so much of this money, that I was extremely alarm-

ed at what might become of me, should he fail to make good the deficiency. His habit of drinking did not at all diminish, and was a frequent source of discord between us ; for when he had drank a little too much, he was very headstrong.

Being one day in a boat together, on the Delaware with some other young persons, he refused to take his turn in rowing. "You shall row for me," said he, "till we get home." "No," I replied, "we will not row for you." "You shall," said he, "or remain upon the water all night—As you please."—"Let us row," said the rest of the company ; "what signifies whether he assists or not?" But already angry with him for his conduct in other respects, I persisted in my refusal. He then swore he

would make me row, or would throw me out of the boat; and he made up to me. As soon as he was within my reach, I took him by the collar, gave him a violent thrust, and threw him head-foremost into the river. I knew that he was a good swimmer, and was therefore under no apprehensions for his life.

Before he could turn himself, we were able, by a few strokes of our oars, to place ourselves out of his reach; and whenever he touched the boat, we asked him if he would row, striking his hands with the oars to make him let go his hold. He was nearly suffocated with rage, but obstinately refused making any promise to row. Perceiving at length that his strength began to be

exhausted, we took him into the boat, and conveyed him home in the evening, completely drenched. The utmost coldness subsisted between us after this adventure. At last, the captain of a West India ship, who was commissioned to procure a tutor for the children of a gentleman at Barbadoes, meeting with Collins, offered him the place. He accepted it, and took his leave of me, promising to discharge the debt he owed me with the first money he should receive; but I have heard nothing of him since.

The violation of the trust reposed in me by Vernon, was one of the first great errors of my life; and it proves that my father was not mistaken when he supposed me too young to be intrusted with the

management of important affairs. But Sir William, upon reading his letter, thought him too prudent. There was a difference, he said, between individuals ; years of maturity were not always accompanied with discretion, neither was youth in every instance devoid of it. Since your father, added he, will not set you up in business, I will do it myself. Make out a list of what will be wanted from England, and I will send for the articles. You shall repay me when you can. I am determined to have a good printer here, and I am sure you will succeed. This was said with so much seeming cordiality, that I suspected not for an instant the sincerity of the offer. I had hitherto kept the project with which Sir

William had inspired me, of settling in business, a secret at Philadelphia, and I still continued to do so. Had my reliance on the governor been known, some friends, better acquainted with his character than myself, would doubtless have advised me not to trust him ; for I afterwards learned that he was universally known to be liberal of promises, which he had no intention to perform. But having never solicited him, how could I suppose his offers to be deceitful ? On the contrary, I believed him to be the best man in the world.

I gave him an inventory of a small printing-office, the expense of which I had calculated at about one hundred pounds sterling. He expressed his approbation ; but

asked if my presence in England, that I might choose the characters myself, and see that every article was good in its kind, would not be an advantage? You will also be able, said he, to form some acquaintance there, and establish a correspondence with stationers and booksellers. This I acknowledged was desirable. That being the case, added he, hold yourself in readiness to go with the Annis. This was the annual vessel, and the only one, at that time, which made regular voyages between the ports of London and Philadelphia. But the Annis was not to sail for some months. I therefore continued to work with Keimer, unhappy respecting the sum which Collins had drawn from me, and almost in

continual agony at the thoughts of Vernon, who fortunately made no demand of his money till several years after.

In the account of my first voyage from Boston to Philadelphia, I omitted, I believe, a trifling circumstance, which will not perhaps be out of place here. During a calm which stopped us above Block-Island, the crew employed themselves in fishing for cod, of which they caught a great number. I had hitherto adhered to my resolution of not eating any thing that had possessed life; and I considered on this occasion, agreeably to the maxims of my master Tryon, the capture of every fish as a sort of murder, committed without provocation, since these animals had

neither done, nor were capable of doing, the smallest injury to any one that should justify the measure. This mode of reasoning I conceived to be unanswerable. Meanwhile I had formerly been extremely fond of fish, and when one of these cod was taken out of the frying-pan, I thought its flavour delicious. I hesitated some time between principle and inclination, till at last recollecting, that when the cod had been opened, some small fish had been found in his belly, I said to myself, if you eat one another, I see no reason why we may not eat you. I accordingly dined on the cod, with no small degree of pleasure, and have since continued to eat like the rest of mankind, returning only occasionally to my vegetable plan.

I continued to live upon good terms with Keimer, who had not the smallest suspicion of my intended establishment. He still retained a portion of his former enthusiasm, and being fond of argument, we frequently disputed together. I was so much in the habit of using my Socratic method, and had so frequently puzzled him by my questions, which appeared at first very distant from the point in debate, yet, nevertheless, led to it by degrees, involving him in difficulties and contradictions from which he was unable to extricate himself, that he became at last ridiculously cautious, and would scarcely answer the most plain and familiar question without previously asking me, What would

you infer from that? Hence he formed so high an opinion of my talents for refutation, that he seriously proposed to me to become his colleague in the establishment of a new religious sect. He was to propagate the doctrine by preaching, and I to refute every opponent.

When he explained to me his tenets, I found many absurdities which I refused to admit, unless he would agree in turn to adopt some of my opinions. Keimer wore his beard long, because Moses had somewhere said, "Thou shalt not mar the corners of thy beard." He likewise observed the Sabbath, and these were with him two very essential points. I consented to adopt them, provided he would abstain from animal food. "I doubt,"

said he, "whether my constitution will be able to support it." I assured him, on the contrary, that he would find himself the better for it. He was naturally a glutton, and I wished to amuse myself by starving him. He consented to make trial of this regimen, if I would bear him company, and in reality we continued it for three months. A woman in the neighbourhood prepared and brought us our victuals, to whom I gave a list of forty dishes, in the composition of which there entered neither flesh nor fish. This fancy was the more agreeable to me, as it turned to good account, for the whole expense of our living did not exceed for each eighteen pence a week.

I continued it cheerfully, but

poor Keimer suffered terribly. Tired of the project, he sighed for "the flesh-pots of Egypt." At length he ordered a roast pig, and invited me and two of our female acquaintance to dine with him ; but the pig being ready a little too soon, he could not resist the temptation, and eat it all up before we arrived.

During the circumstances I have related, I had paid some attentions to Miss Read. I entertained for her the utmost esteem and affection ; and I had reason to believe that these sentiments were mutual. But we were both young, scarcely more than eighteen years of age ; and as I was on the point of undertaking a long voyage, her mother thought it prudent to prevent mat-

ters being carried too far for the present, judging that if marriage was our object, there would be more propriety in it after my return, when, as at least I expected, I should be established in my business. Perhaps, also, she thought that my expectations were not so well founded as I imagined.

My most intimate acquaintance at this time were Charles Osborne, Joseph Watson, and James Ralph. It was a custom with us to take a walk on Sundays in the woods that bordered on the Schuylkill. Here we read together, and afterwards conversed on what we read. Ralph was disposed to give himself up entirely to poetry. He flattered himself that he should arrive at great eminence in the art, and even

acquire a fortune. The sublimest poets, he pretended, when they first began to write, committed as many faults as himself. Osborne endeavoured to dissuade him from it by assuring him that he had no genius for poetry, and advised him to stick to the trade in which he had been brought up. "In the road of commerce," said he, "you will be sure, by diligence and assiduity, though you have no capital, of so far succeeding as to be employed as a factor, and may thus, in time, acquire the means of setting up for yourself." I concurred in these sentiments, but at the same time expressed my approbation of amusing ourselves sometimes with poetry, with a view to improve our style. In consequence of this it

was proposed, that, at our next meeting, each of us should bring a copy of verses of his own composition. Our object in this competition was, to benefit each other by our mutual remarks, criticisms, and corrections; and, as style and expression were all we had in view, we excluded every idea of invention, by agreeing that our task should be a version of the eighteenth psalm, in which is described the descent of the Deity.

The time of our meeting drew near, when Ralph called upon me, and told me his piece was ready. I informed him that I had been idle, and, not much liking the task, had done nothing. He showed me his piece, and asked what I thought of it. I expressed myself in terms of

warm approbation, because it really appeared to have considerable merit. He then said, "Osborne will never acknowledge the smallest degree of excellence in any production of mine. Envy alone dictates to him a thousand animadversions. Of you he is not so jealous; I wish, therefore, you would take the verses and produce them as your own. I will pretend not to have had leisure to write any thing. We shall then see in what manner he will speak of them." I agreed to this little artifice, and immediately transcribed the verses, to prevent all suspicion.

We met. Watson's performance was the first that was read. It had some beauties, but many faults. We next read Osborne's, which was much better. Ralph did it

justice, remarking a few imperfections, and applauding such parts as were excellent. He had himself nothing to show. It was now my turn. I made some difficulty, seemed as if I wished to be excused, pretended that I had no time to make corrections, &c. No excuse, however, was admissible, and the piece must be produced. It was read and re-read. Watson and Osborne immediately resigned the palm, and united in applauding it. Ralph alone made a few remarks, and proposed some alterations; but I defended my text. Osborne agreed with me, and told Ralph he was no more able to criticise than he was able to write.

When Osborne was alone with me, he expressed himself still more

strongly in favour of what he considered as my performance. He pretended that he had put some constraint on himself before, apprehensive of my construing his commendation into flattery. But who would have supposed, said he, Franklin to be capable of such a composition? What painting, what energy, what fire! He has surpassed the original! In his common conversation he appears not to have choice of words; he hesitates, and is at a loss; and yet, good God, how he writes!

At our next meeting, Ralph discovered the trick we had played Osborne, who was rallied without mercy.

The governor appeared to be fond of my company, and frequently

invited me to his house. He always spoke of his intention of settling me in business, as a point that was decided. I was to take with me letters of recommendation to a number of friends, and particularly a letter of credit, in order to obtain the necessary sum for the purchase of my press, types, and paper. He appointed various times for me to come for these letters, which would certainly be ready; and when I came, always put me off to another day.

These successive delays continued till the vessel, whose departure had been several times deferred, was on the point of setting sail, when I again went to Sir William's house, to receive my letters and take leave of him. I saw his

secretary, Dr. Bard, who told me that the governor was extremely busy writing, but that he would be down at Newcastle before the vessel, and that the letters would be delivered to me there.

Ralph, though he was married, and had a child, determined to accompany me in this voyage. His object was supposed to be the establishing a correspondence with some mercantile houses, in order to sell goods by commission; but I afterwards learned, that having reason to be dissatisfied with the parents of his wife, he proposed to himself to leave her on their hands, and never to return to America again.

Having taken leave of my friends, and interchanged promises

of fidelity with Miss Read, I quitted Philadelphia. At Newcastle the vessel came to anchor. The governor was arrived, and I went to his lodgings. His secretary received me with great civility, told me, on the part of the governor, that he could not see me then, as he was engaged in affairs of the utmost importance; but that he would send the letters on board, and that he wished me, with all his heart, a good voyage and speedy return. I returned somewhat astonished, but still without entertaining the slightest suspicion.

Mr. Hamilton, a celebrated barrister of Philadelphia, had taken a passage to England for himself and his son; and, in conjunction with Mr. Denham, a Quaker, and

Messrs. Oniam and Russel, proprietors of a forge in Maryland, had agreed for the whole cabin; so that Ralph and I were obliged to take up our lodging with the crew. Being unknown to everybody in the ship, we were looked upon as the common order of people; but Mr. Hamilton and his son (it was James, who was afterwards governor,) left us at Newcastle, and returned to Philadelphia, whither he was recalled, at a very great expense, to plead the cause of a vessel that had been seized; and just as we were about to sail, Colonel Finch came on board, and showed me many civilities. The passengers, upon this, paid me more attention, and I was invited, together with my friend Ralph, to

occupy the place in the cabin which the return of the Mr. Hamiltons had made vacant, an offer which we very readily accepted.

Having learned that the despatches of the governor had been brought on board by Colonel Finch, I asked the captain for the letters that were to be intrusted to my care. He told me that they were all put together in the bag, which he could not open at present; but before we reached England, he would give me an opportunity of taking them out. I was satisfied with this answer, and we pursued our voyage.

The company in the cabin were all very sociable, and we were all perfectly well off as to provisions, as we took the advantage of the whole

of Mr. Hamilton's, who had laid in a very plentiful stock. During the passage, Mr. Denham contracted a friendship for me, which ended only with his life: in other respects, the voyage was by no means an agreeable one, as we had much bad weather.

When we arrived in the river Thames, the captain was as good as his word, and allowed me to search the bag for the governor's letters. I could not find a single one with my name written on it, as committed to my care; but I selected six or seven, which I judged, from the direction, to be those that were intended for me, particularly one to Mr. Basket, the king's printer, and another to a stationer, who was the first person I called upon.

I delivered him the letter as coming from Governor Keith. "I have no acquaintance (said he) with any such person;" and opening the letter, "Oh, it is from Riddlesden, (he exclaimed) I have lately discovered him to be a very arrant knave, and I wish to have nothing to do either with him or his letters." He instantly put the letter in my hand, turned upon his heel, and left me to serve some customers.

I was astonished at finding these letters were not from the governor. Reflecting, and putting circumstances together, I then began to doubt his sincerity. I rejoined my friend Denham, and related the whole affair to him. He let me at once into Keith's character, told me there was not the least proba-

bility of his having written a single letter ; that no one who knew him ever placed any reliance on him, and laughed at my credulity in supposing that the governor would give me a letter of credit, when he had no credit for himself. As I showed some uneasiness respecting what step I should take, he advised me to try to get employment in the house of some printer. You may there, said he, improve yourself in business, and you will be able to settle yourself the more advantageously when you return to America.

But what are we to think of a governor who could play so scurvy a trick, and thus grossly deceive a poor young lad, wholly destitute of experience ? It was a practice with him. Wishing to please every

body, and having little to bestow, he was lavish of promises. He was, in other respects, sensible and judicious, a very tolerable writer, and a good governor for the people, though not so for the proprietaries, whose instructions he frequently disregarded. Many of our best laws were his work, and established during his administration.

Ralph and I were inseparable companions. We took a lodging together at three shillings and sixpence a week, which was as much as we could afford. He met with some relations in London, but they were poor, and not able to assist him. He now, for the first time, informed me of his intention to remain in England, and that he had no thoughts of ever returning to

Philadelphia. He was totally without money, the little he had been able to raise having barely sufficed for his passage. I had still fifteen pistoles remaining, and to me he had from time to time recourse, while he tried to get employment.

At first, believing himself possessed of talents for the stage, he thought of turning actor; but Wilkes, to whom he applied, frankly advised him to renounce the idea, as it was impossible to succeed. He next proposed to Roberts, a bookseller in Pater-noster-Row, to write a weekly paper in the manner of the Spectator, upon terms to which Roberts would not listen. Lastly, he endeavoured to procure employment as a copyist, and applied to the lawyers and stationers about

the Temple, but he could find no vacancy.

As to myself, I immediately got engaged at Palmer's, at that time a noted printer in Bartholomew-Close, with whom I continued nearly a year. I applied very assiduously to my work, but I expended with Ralph almost all that I earned. Plays, and other places of amusement, which we frequented together, having exhausted my pistoles, we lived after this from hand to mouth. He appeared to have entirely forgotten his wife and child, as I also, by degrees, forgot my engagements with Miss Read, to whom I never wrote more than one letter, and that merely to inform her that I was not likely to return soon. This was another grand error of my

life, which I should be desirous of correcting, were I to begin my career again.

I was employed at Palmer's on the second edition of Woolaston's Religion of Nature. Some of his arguments appearing to me not to be well founded, I wrote a small metaphysical treatise, in which I animadverted on those passages. It was entitled, A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain. I dedicated it to my friend Ralph, and printed a small number of copies. Palmer upon this treated me with more consideration, and regarded me as a young man of talents, though he seriously took me to task for the principles of my pamphlet, which he looked upon as abominable. The printing

of this work was another error of my life.

While I lodged in Little Britain, I formed an acquaintance with a bookseller of the name of Wilcox, whose shop was next door to me. Circulating libraries were not then in use. He had an immense collection of books of all sorts. We agreed that, for a reasonable retribution, of which I have now forgotten the price, I should have free access to his library, and take what books I pleased, which I was to return when I had read them. I considered this agreement as a very great advantage, and I derived from it as much benefit as was in my power.

My pamphlet falling into the hands of a surgeon of the name

of Lyons, author of a book entitled *Infallibility of Human Judgment*, was the occasion of a considerable intimacy between us. He expressed great esteem for me, came frequently to see me, in order to converse upon metaphysical subjects, and introduced me to Dr. Mandeville, author of the *Fables of the Bees*, who had instituted a club at a tavern in Cheapside, of which he was the soul; he was a facetious and very amusing character. He also introduced me, at Batson's Coffee-house, to Dr. Pemberton, who promised to give me an opportunity of seeing Sir Isaac Newton, which I very ardently desired; but he never kept his word.

I had brought some curiosities from America, the principal of

which was a purse made of the asbestos, which fire only purifies. Sir Hans Sloane hearing of it, called upon me, and invited me to his house in Bloomsbury-square, where, after showing me everything that was curious, he prevailed on me to add this piece to his collection, for which he paid me very handsomely.

I now began to think of laying by some money. The printing-house of Watts, near Lincoln's Inn-Fields, being a still more considerable one than that in which I worked, it was probable I might find it more advantageous to be employed there. I offered myself and was accepted, and in this house I continued during the remainder of my stay in London.

On my entrance, I worked at first as a pressman; conceiving that I had need of bodily exercise, to which I had been accustomed in America, where the printers work alternately as compositors and at the press. I drank nothing but water. The other workmen, to the amount of about fifty, were great drinkers of beer. I carried, occasionally, a large form of letters in each hand up and down stairs, while the rest employed both hands to carry one. They were surprised to see, by this and many other examples, that the *American Aquatic*, as they used to call me, was stronger than those who drank porter. The beer-boy had sufficient employment during the whole day in serving that house alone.

My fellow pressman drank every day a pint of beer before breakfast, a pint with bread and cheese for breakfast, one between breakfast and dinner, one at dinner, one again about six o'clock in the afternoon, and another after he had finished his day's work. This custom appeared to me abominable; but he had need, he said, of all his beer, in order to acquire strength to work.

I endeavoured to convince him that bodily strength furnished by beer, could only be in proportion to the solid part of the barley dissolved in the water of which the beer was composed; that there was a larger portion of flour in a penny loaf, and that consequently if he eat this loaf, and drank a pint

of water with it, he would derive more strength from it than from a pint of beer. This reasoning, however, did not prevent him from drinking his accustomed quantity of beer, and paying every Saturday night a score of four or five shillings a week for this beverage; an expense from which I was totally exempt. Thus do these poor devils continue all their lives in a state of voluntary wretchedness and poverty.

At the end of a few weeks, Watts having occasion for me above stairs as a compositor, I quitted the press. The compositors demanded of me garnish-money afresh. This I considered as an imposition, already paid below. The master was of the same

opinion, and desired me not to comply. I thus remained two or three weeks out of the fraternity. I was consequently looked upon as excommunicated, and whenever I was absent, no little trick that malice could suggest was left unpractised upon me. I found my letters mixed, my pages transposed, my matter broken, &c., &c., all which was attributed to the spirit that haunted the Chapel,* and tormented those who were not regularly admitted. I was at last obliged to submit to pay, notwithstanding the protection of the master; con-

* Printing-houses in general, are thus denominated by the workmen, as the first office set up in England, by Caxton, was in a Chapel in Westminster.—The spirit they call Ralph.

vinced of the folly of not keeping up a good understanding with those among whom we were destined to live.

After this, I lived in the utmost harmony with my fellow-labourers, and soon acquired considerable influence among them. I proposed some alterations in the laws of the Chapel, which I carried without opposition. My example prevailed with several of them to renounce their abominable practice of bread and cheese with beer; and they procured, like me, from a neighbouring house, a good bason of warm gruel, in which was a small slice of butter, with toasted bread and nutmeg. This was a much better breakfast, which did not cost more than a pint of beer, namely,

three half-pence, and at the same time preserved the head clearer. Those who continued to gorge themselves with beer, often lost their credit with the publican, from neglecting to pay their score. They had then recourse to me, to become security for them, their light, as they used to call it, being out. I attended at the pay-table every Saturday evening, to take up the little sums which I had made myself answerable for, and which sometimes amounted to near thirty shillings a week.

This circumstance, added to my reputation of being a good *gabber*, or in other words, skilful in the art of burlesque, kept up my importance in the Chapel. I had, besides, recommended myself to the esteem

of my master, by my assiduous application to business, never observing *Saint Monday*. My extraordinary quickness in composing always procured me such work as was most urgent, and which is commonly best paid ; and thus my time passed away in a very pleasant manner.

My lodging in Little Britain being too far from the printing-house, I took another in Duke-street, opposite the Roman Chapel. It was the back of an Italian warehouse. The house was kept by a widow, who had a daughter, a servant, and a shop-boy, but the latter slept out of the house. After sending to the people with whom I lodged in Little Britain, to inquire into my character, she agreed to take me at

the same price, three-and-sixpence a week, contenting herself, she said, with so little, because of the security she would derive, as they were all women, from having a man to lodge in the same house.

At the printing-house I contracted an intimacy with a sensible young man, of the name of Wygate, who, as his parents were in good circumstances, had received a better education than is common with printers. He was a tolerable Latin scholar, spoke French fluently, and was fond of reading. I taught him, as well as a friend of his, to swim, by taking them twice only in the river, after which they stood in need of no farther assistance. We one day made a party to go by water to Chelsea, in order to see the College,

and Don Saltero's curiosities. On our return, at the request of the company, whose curiosity Wygate had excited, I undressed myself, and leaped into the river. I swam from near Chelsea the whole way to Blackfriars-Bridge, exhibiting, during my course, a variety of feats of activity and address, both upon the surface of the water, as well as under it. This sight occasioned much astonishment and pleasure to those to whom it was new. In my youth I took great delight in this exercise. I knew, and could execute, all the evolutions and positions of Thevenot, and I added to them some of my own invention, in which I endeavoured to unite gracefulness and utility. I took a pleasure in displaying them all upon this

occasion, and was highly flattered with the admiration they excited.

Wygate, besides being desirous of perfecting himself in this art, was the more attached to me from there being, in other respects, a conformity in our tastes and studies. He at length proposed to me to make the tour of Europe with him, maintaining ourselves at the same time by working at our profession. I was on the point of consenting, when I mentioned it to my friend Denham, with whom I was glad to pass an hour whenever I had leisure. He dissuaded me from the project, and advised me to return to Philadelphia, which he was about to do himself. I must relate in this place a trait of this worthy man's character.—

He had formerly been in business at Bristol, but failing, he compounded with his creditors, and departed for America, where, by assiduous application as a merchant, he acquired in a few years a very considerable fortune. Returning to England in the same vessel with myself, as I have related above, he invited all his old creditors to a feast. When assembled, he thanked them for the readiness with which they had received his small composition; and while they expected nothing more than a simple entertainment, each found under his plate, when it came to be removed, a draft upon a banker for the residue of his debt, with interest.

He told me it was his intention to carry back with him to Philadel-

phia a great quantity of goods, in order to open a store ; and he offered to take me with him in the capacity of a clerk, to keep his books, in which he would instruct me, copy letters, and superintend the store. He added, that, as soon as I had acquired a knowledge of mercantile transactions, he would improve my situation, by sending me with a cargo of corn and flour to the American islands, and other lucrative commissions ; so that, with good management and economy might, in time, begin business with advantage for myself. *

I relished these proposals—London began to tire me ; the agreeable hours I had passed at Philadelphia presented themselves to my mind, and I wished to see them revive.

I consequently engaged myself to Mr. Denham, at a salary of fifty pounds a year. This was indeed less than I earned as a compositor ; but then I had a fairer prospect. I took leave, therefore, as I believed, for ever, of printing, and gave myself up entirely to my new occupation, spending all my time either in going from house to house with Mr. Denham, to purchase goods, or in packing them up, or in expediting the workmen, &c. &c. When every thing, however, was on board, I had at last a few days leisure.

I thus passed about eighteen months in London, working almost without intermission at my trade, avoiding all expense on my own account, except going now and then

to the play, and purchasing a few books. But my friend Ralph kept me poor. He owed me about twenty-seven pounds, which was so much money lost, and when considered as taken from my little savings, was a very great sum. I had, notwithstanding this, a regard for him, as he possessed many amiable qualities. But though I had done nothing for myself in point of fortune, I had increased my stock of knowledge, either by the many excellent books I had read, or the conversation of learned and literary persons with whom I was acquainted.

We sailed from Gravesend the twenty-third of July, 1726, and landed at Philadelphia on the eleventh of the following October.

Keith had been deprived of his office of governor, and was succeeded by Major Gordon. I met him walking in the streets as a private individual. He appeared a little ashamed at seeing me, but passed on without saying anything.

I should have been equally ashamed myself at meeting Miss Read, had not her family, justly despairing of my return after reading my letter, advised her to give me up, and marry a potter, of the name of Rogers, to which she consented ; but he never made her happy, and she soon separated from him, refusing to cohabit with him, or even bear his name, on account of a report which prevailed of his having another wife. His skill in his profession had seduced Miss

Read's parents ; but he was as bad a subject as he was excellent as a workman. He involved himself in debt and fled, in the year 1727 or 1728, to the West Indies, where he died.

Mr. Denham took a warehouse in Water street, where we exhibited our commodities. I applied myself closely, studied accounts, and became in a short time very expert in trade. We lodged and eat together. He was sincerely attached to me, and acted towards me as if he had been my father. On my side, I respected and loved him. My situation was happy, but it was a happiness of no long duration.

Early in February, 1727, when I entered into my twenty-second

year, we were both taken ill. I was attacked with a pleurisy, which had nearly carried me off; I suffered terribly, and considered it as all over with me. I felt, indeed, a sort of disappointment when I found myself likely to recover, and regretted that I had still to experience, soon or later, the same disagreeable scene again.

I have forgotten what was Mr. Denham's disorder, but it was a tedious one, and he at last sunk under it. He left me a small legacy in his will, as a testimony of his friendship; and I was once more abandoned to myself in the wide world, the warehouse being confided to the care of the testamentary executor, who dismissed me.

My brother-in-law, Holmes, who happened to be at Philadelphia, advised me to return to my former profession ; and Keimer offered me a very considerable salary if I would undertake the management of his printing-office, that he might devote himself entirely to the superintendence of his shop. His wife and relations in London had given me a bad character of him, and I was loth, for the present, to have any concern with him. I endeavoured to get employment as a clerk to a merchant ; but not readily finding a situation, I was induced to accept Keimer's proposal.

I soon perceived that Keimer's intention in engaging me at a price so much above what he was accustomed to give, was, that I might

form all his raw journeymen and apprentices, who scarcely cost him anything, and who, being indentured, would, as soon as they should be sufficiently instructed, enable him to do without me. I nevertheless adhered to my agreement. I put his office in order, which was in the utmost confusion, and brought his people, by degrees, to execute their work in a more proper manner.

I increased my acquaintance with persons of knowledge and information in the town. Keimer himself treated me with great civility and apparent esteem; and I had nothing to give me uneasiness but my debt to Vernon, which I was unable to pay, my savings as yet being very little. He had the



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goodness, however, not to ask me for the money.

Our press was frequently in want of the necessary quantity of letter, and there was no such trade as that of letter-founder in America. I had seen the practice of this art at the house of James, in London, but at the same time paid very little attention to it. I, however, contrived to fabricate a mould. I made use of such letters as we had for punches, founded new letters of lead in matrices of clay, and thus supplied, in a tolerable manner, the wants that were most pressing.

I also, upon occasion, engraved various ornaments, made ink, gave an eye to the shop; in short, I was, in every respect, the *factotum*.

But useful as I made myself, I perceived that my services became every day of less importance, in proportion as the other men improved; and when Keimer paid me my second quarter's wages, he gave me to understand that they were too heavy, and that he thought I ought to make an abatement. He became by degrees less civil, and assumed more the tone of master. He frequently found fault, was difficult to please, and seemed always on the point of coming to an open quarrel with me.

I continued, however, to bear it patiently, conceiving that his ill-humour was partly occasioned by the derangement and embarrassment of his affairs. At last a slight incident broke our con-

nexion. Hearing a noise in the neighbourhood, I put my head out of the window to see what was the matter. Keimer being in the street, observed me, and, in a loud and angry tone, told me to mind my work ; adding some reproachful words, which piqued me the more as they were uttered in the street, and the neighbours, whom the same noise had attracted to the windows, were witnesses of the manner in which I was treated. He immediately came up to the printing-room, and continued to exclaim against me. The quarrel became warm on both sides, and he gave me notice to quit him at the expiration of three months, as had been agreed between us, regretting that he was obliged to give me so long a term. I told

him that his regret was superfluous, as I was ready to quit him instantly ; and I took my hat and came out of the house, begging Meredith to take care of some things which I left, and bring them to my lodgings.

Meredith came to me in the evening. We talked for some time upon the quarrel that had taken place. He had conceived a great veneration for me, and was sorry I should quit the house while he remained in it. He dissuaded me from returning to my native country, as I began to think of doing. He reminded me that Keimer owed more than he possessed ; that his creditors began to be alarmed ; that he kept his shop in a wretched state, often selling things at prime

cost for the sake of ready money, and continually giving credit, without keeping any accounts ; that, of consequence, he must very soon fail, which would occasion a vacancy from which I might derive advantage. I objected my want of money. Upon which he informed me, that his father had a very high opinion of me, and, from a conversation that had passed between them, he was sure that he would advance whatever might be necessary to establish us, if I was willing to enter into partnership with him. " My time with Keimer, (added he) will be at an end next spring. In the meantime we may send to London for our press and types. I know that I am no workman ; but if you agree to the proposal, your

skill in the business will be balanced by the capital I will furnish, and we will share the profits equally." His proposal was reasonable, and I fell in with it. His father, who was then in town, approved of it. He knew that I had some ascendancy over his son, as I had been able to prevail on him to abstain a long time from drinking brandy; and he hoped, that, when more closely connected with him, I should cure him entirely of this unfortunate habit.

I gave the father a list of what it would be necessary to import from London. He took it to a merchant, and the order was given. We agreed to keep the secret till the arrival of the materials, and I was, in the mean time, to procure

work, if possible, in another printing-house ; but there was no place vacant, and I remained idle. After some days, Keimer, having the expectation of being employed to print some New-Jersey money-bills, that would require types and engravings, which I only could furnish, and fearful that Bradford, by engaging me, might deprive him of the undertaking, sent me a very civil message, telling me that old friends ought not to be disunited on account of a few words, which were the effects only of a momentary passion, and inviting me to return to him. Meredith persuaded me to comply with the invitation, particularly as it would afford him more opportunities of improving himself in the business, by means

of my instructions. I did so ; and we lived upon better terms than before our separation.

He obtained the New-Jersey business ; and, in order to execute it, I constructed a copper-plate printing-press, the first that had been seen in the country. I engraved various ornaments and vignettes for the bills, and we repaired to Burlington together, where I executed the whole to the general satisfaction ; and he received a sum of money for this work, which enabled him to keep his head above water for a considerable time longer.

At Burlington I formed an acquaintance with the principal personages of the province, many of whom were commissioned by the Assembly to superintend the press,

and to see that no more bills were printed than the law had prescribed. Accordingly, they were constantly with us, each in his turn, and he that came commonly brought with him a friend or two, to bear him company. My mind was more cultivated by reading than Keimer's, and it was for this reason, probably, that they set more value on my conversation. They took me to their houses, introduced me to their friends, and treated me with the greatest civility; while Keimer, though master, saw himself a little neglected. He was, in fact, a strange animal, ignorant of the common modes of life, apt to oppose with rudeness generally received opinions, an enthusiast in certain points of religion, disgustingly un-

clean in his person, and a little knavish withal.

We remained there nearly three months, and at the expiration of this period I could include in the list of my friends, Judge Allen, Samuel Bustil, secretary of the province, Isaac Pearson, Joseph Cooper, several of the Smiths, all members of the Assembly, and Isaac Deacon, Inspector-general. The last was a shrewd and subtle old man. He told me that when a boy, his first employment had been that of carrying clay to brick-makers; that he did not learn to write till he was somewhat advanced in life; that he was afterwards employed as an underling to a surveyor, who taught him his trade; and that, by industry, he had

acquired a competent fortune. "I foresee (said he one day to me) that you will soon supplant this man, (speaking of Keimer) and get a fortune in the business at Philadelphia." He was wholly ignorant at the time of my intention of establishing myself there or anywhere else. These friends were very serviceable to me in the end, as was I also, upon occasion, to some of them, and they have continued ever since their esteem for me.

I had not long returned from Burlington before our printing materials arrived from London. I settled my accounts with Keimer, and quitted him, with his own consent, before he had any knowledge of our plan. We found a house to let near the market. We took it,

and to render the rent less burthensome (it was then twenty pounds a year, but I have since known it to let for one hundred pounds,) we admitted Thomas Godfrey, a glazier, with his family, who eased us of a considerable part of it, and with him we agreed to board.

We had no sooner unpacked our letters and put our press in order, than a person of my acquaintance, George House, brought us a countryman, whom he had met in the street inquiring for a printer. Our money was almost exhausted by the number of things we had been obliged to procure. The five shillings we received from this countryman, the first fruits of our earnings, coming so seasonably, gave me more pleasure than any

sum I have since gained ; and the recollection of the gratitude I felt on this occasion to George House, has rendered me often more disposed than perhaps I should otherwise have been, to encourage young beginners in trade.

I ought to have related, that, during the autumn of the preceding year, I had united the majority of well informed persons into a club, which we called by the name of the *Junto*, and the object of which was to improve our understandings. We met every Friday. The regulations I drew up obliged every member to propose, in his turn, one or more questions upon some point of morality, politics, or philosophy, which were to be discussed by the society ; and to read once

in three months an essay of his own composition, on whatever subject he pleased. Our debates were under the direction of a president, and were to be dictated only by a sincere desire of truth, the pleasure of disputing and the vanity of triumph having no share in the business ; and in order to prevent undue warmth, every expression which implied obstinate adherence to an opinion, and all direct contradiction, were prohibited, under small pecuniary penalties.

This was the best school of politics and philosophy that then existed in the province ; for our questions, which were read a week previous to their discussion, induced us to peruse attentively such books as were written upon the

subjects proposed, that we might be able to speak upon them more pertinently. We thus acquired the habit of conversing more agreeably; every subject being discussed conformably to our regulations, and in a manner to prevent mutual disgust. To this circumstance may be attributed the long duration of the club, which I shall have frequent occasion to mention, as I proceed.

I have introduced it here, as being one of the means on which I had to count for my success in my business, every member exerting himself to procure work for us. Breintnal, among others, obtained for us, on the part of the Quakers, the printing of forty sheets of their history, the rest of which was to

be done by Keimer. Our execution of this work was by no means masterly, as the price was very low. It was in folio, upon Propatria paper, and in Pica letter, with heavy notes in the smallest type. I composed a sheet a day, and Meredith put it to press. It was frequently eleven o'clock at night, sometimes later, before I had finished my distribution for the next day's task; for the little things which our friends occasionally sent us, kept us back in this work; but I was so determined to compose a sheet a day, that one evening, when my form was imposed, and my day's work, as I thought, at an end, an accident having broken this form, and deranged two complete folio pages, I immediately distributed,

and composed them anew before I went to bed.

This unwearied industry, which was perceived by our neighbours, began to acquire us reputation and credit. I learned, among other things, that our new printing-house being the subject of conversation at a club of merchants, who met every evening, it was the general opinion it would fail, there being already two printing-houses in the town, Keimer's and Bradford's. But Dr. Bard, whom you and I had occasion to see many years after, at his native town of St. Andrew's, in Scotland, was of a different opinion. "The industry of this Franklin (said he) is superior to anything of the kind I have ever witnessed. I see him still at work

when I return from the club at night, and he is at it again in the morning before his neighbours are out of bed." This account struck the rest of the assembly, and shortly after, one of its members came to our house, and offered to supply us with articles of stationary; but we wished not as yet to embarrass ourselves with keeping a shop. It is not for the sake of applause that I enter so freely into the particulars of my industry, but that such of my descendants as shall read these memoirs, may know the use of this virtue, by seeing, in the recital of my life, the effects it operated in my favour.

George Webb, having found a friend who lent him the necessary sum to buy out his time with Kei-

mer, came one day to offer himself to us as a journeyman. We could not employ him immediately ; but I foolishly told him, under the rose, that I intended shortly to publish a new periodical paper, and that we should then have work for him. My hopes of success which I imparted to him, were founded on the circumstance, that the only paper we had in Philadelphia, at that time, and which Bradford printed, was a paltry thing, miserably conducted, in no respect amusing, and yet was profitable. Webb betrayed my secret to Keimer, who, to prevent me, immediately published the prospectus of a paper that he intended to institute himself, and in which Webb was to be engaged.

I was exasperated at this pro-

ceeding, and, with a view to counteract them, not being able at present to institute my own paper, I wrote some humorous pieces in Bradford's, under the title of the Busy-Body, and which was continued for several months by Breintnal. I hereby fixed the attention of the public upon Bradford's paper; and the prospectus of Keimer, which he turned into ridicule, was treated with contempt. He began, notwithstanding, his paper, and after continuing it for nine months, having at most not more than ninety subscribers, he offered it me for a mere trifle. I had for some time been ready for such an engagement; I therefore instantly took it upon myself, and in a few years it proved extremely profitable to me.

Our first number produced no other effect than any other paper which had appeared in the province, as to type and printing, but some remarks, in my peculiar style of writing, upon the dispute which then prevailed between Governor Burnet and the Massachusetts Assembly, struck some persons as above mediocrity, caused the paper and its editors to be talked of, and in a few weeks induced them to become our subscribers. Many others followed their example, and our subscription began to increase. This was one of the first good effects of the pains I had taken to learn to put my ideas on paper. I derived this further advantage from it, that the leading men in the place, seeing, in the author of this publication, a

man so well able to use his pen, thought it right to encourage and patronize me.

The votes, laws, and other public pieces, were printed by Bradford. An address of the house of Assembly to the governor, had been executed by him in a very coarse and incorrect manner. We reprinted it with accuracy and neatness, and sent a copy to every member; they perceived the difference, and it so strengthened the influence of our friends in the Assembly, that we were nominated its printer for the following year.

Among these friends, I ought not to forget one member in particular, Mr. Hamilton, whom I have mentioned in a former part of my narrative, and who was now returned

from England. He warmly interested himself for me on this occasion, as he did likewise on many others afterwards, having continued his kindness to me till his death.

About this period Mr. Vernon reminded me of the debt I owed him, but without pressing me for payment. I wrote him a handsome letter on the occasion, begging him to wait a little longer, to which he consented; and as soon as I was able I paid him principal and interest, with many expressions of gratitude: so that this error of my life was in a manner atoned for.

But another trouble now happened to me, which, I had not the smallest reason to expect. Meredith's father, who, according to our

agreement, was to defray the whole expense of our printing materials, had only paid one hundred pounds. Another hundred was still due, and the merchant being tired of waiting, commenced a suit against us. We bailed the action, with a melancholy prospect, that if the money was not forthcoming at the time fixed, the affair would come to issue, judgment be put in execution, our delightful hopes be annihilated, and ourselves entirely ruined; as the type and press must be sold, perhaps at half their value, to pay the debt.

In this distress, two real friends, whose generous conduct I have never forgotten, and never shall forget while I retain the remembrance of any thing, came to me

separately, without the knowledge of each other, and without my having applied to them. Each offered me whatever sum might be necessary to take the business into my own hands, if the thing was practicable, as they did not like I should continue in partnership with Meredith, who, they said, was frequently seen drunk in the streets, and gambling at ale-houses, which very much injured our credit. — These friends were William Coleman and Robert Grace. I paid the partnership debts, and continued the business on my own account, taking care to inform the public, by advertisement, of the partnership being dissolved. This was, I think, in the year 1729, or thereabout.

Nearly at the same period the

people demanded a new emission of paper money, the existing and only one that had taken place in the province, and which amounted to fifteen thousand pounds, being soon to expire. The wealthy inhabitants, prejudiced against every sort of paper currency, from the fear of its depreciation, of which there had been an instance in New-England, to the injury of its holders, strongly opposed the measure.

We had discussed this affair in our Junta, in which I was on the side of the new emission; convinced that the first small sum fabricated in 1723 had done much good in the province, by favouring commerce, industry, and population, since all the houses were now inhabited, and many others building;

whereas I remembered to have seen, when first I paraded the streets of Philadelphia, eating my roll, the majority of those in Walnut street, Second street, Fourth street, as well as a great number in Chesnut, and other streets, with papers on them, signifying that they were to be let, which made me think at the time that the inhabitants of the town were deserting it one after another.

Our debates made me so fully master of the subject, that I wrote and published an anonymous pamphlet, entitled, "An Inquiry into the Nature and Necessity of a paper Currency." It was very well received by the lower and middling class of people; but it displeased the opulent, as it increased the clamour in favour of the new emission.

Having, however, no writer among them capable of answering it, their opposition became less violent ; and there being in the House of Assembly a majority for the measure, it passed. The friends I had acquired in the House, persuaded that I had done the country essential service on this occasion, rewarded me by giving me the printing of the bills. It was a lucrative employment, and proved a very seasonable help to me ; another advantage which I derived from having habituated myself to write.

Time and experience so fully demonstrated the utility of paper currency, that it never experienced any considerable opposition ; so that it soon amounted to £55,000, and in the year 1739, to £80,000.

It has since risen, during the last war, to £350,000, trade, buildings, and population having in the interval continually increased; but I am now convinced that there are limits beyond which paper money would be prejudicial.

I soon after obtained, by the influence of my friend Hamilton, the printing of the Newcastle paper money, another profitable work, as I then thought it, little things appearing great to persons of moderate fortune; and they were really great to me, as proving great encouragements. He also procured me the printing of the laws and votes of that government, which I retained as long as I continued in the business.

I now opened a small stationer's

shop. I kept bonds and agreements of all kinds drawn up in a more accurate form than had yet been seen in that part of the world, a work in which I was assisted by my friend Breintnal. I had also paper, parchment, pasteboard, books, &c. One Whitemash, an excellent compositor, whom I had known in London, came to offer himself. I engaged him, and he continued constantly at work with me ; I also took an apprentice, the son of Aquila Rose.

I began to pay by degrees the debt I had contracted, and in order to insure my credit and character as a tradesman, I took care not only to be really industrious and frugal, but also to avoid every appearance of the contrary. I was

plainly dressed, and never seen in any place of amusement. I never went a fishing or hunting. A book, indeed, enticed me sometimes from my work, but it was seldom, by stealth, and occasioned no scandal ; and to show that I was not above my profession, I conveyed home sometimes in a wheelbarrow the paper I purchased at the warehouses.

I thus obtained the reputation of being an industrious young man, and very punctual in my payments. The merchants who imported articles of stationary solicited my custom, others offered to furnish me with books, and my little trade went on prosperously.

Meanwhile the business and credit of Keimer diminishing every day, he was at last forced to sell

his stock to satisfy his creditors, and he betook himself to Barbadoes, where he lived some time in a very impoverished state. His apprentice, David Harry, whom I had instructed while I worked with Keimer, having bought his materials, succeeded him in the business. I was apprehensive at first of finding in Harry a powerful competitor, as he was allied to an opulent and respectable family ; I therefore proposed a partnership, which, happily for me, he rejected with disdain. He was extremely proud, thought himself a fine gentleman, lived extravagantly, and pursued amusements which suffered him to be scarcely ever at home ; of consequence, he became in debt, neglected his business, and business ne-

glected him. Finding in a short time nothing to be done in the country, he followed Keimer to Barbadoes, carrying his printing materials with him. There the apprentice employed his old master as a journeyman. They were continually quarrelling, and Harry still getting in debt, was obliged at last to sell his press and types, and return to his old occupation of husbandry in Pennsylvania. The person who purchased them employed Keimer to manage the business, but he died a few years after.

I had now at Philadelphia no competitor but Bradford, who, being in easy circumstances, did not engage in the printing of books, except now and then as workmen

chanced to offer themselves, and was not anxious to extend his trade. He had, however, one advantage over me, as he had the direction of the post-office, and was, of consequence, supposed to have better opportunities of obtaining news. His paper was also supposed to be more advantageous to advertising customers, and in consequence of that supposition, his advertisements were much more numerous than mine; this was a source of great profit to him, and disadvantageous to me. It was to no purpose that I really procured other papers, and distributed my own, by means of the post; the public took for granted my inability in this respect, and I was indeed unable to conquer it in any other mode

than by bribing the post-boys, who served me only by stealth, Bradford being so illiberal as to forbid them. This treatment of his excited my resentment, and my disgust was so rooted, that when I afterwards succeeded him in the post-office, I took care to avoid copying his example.

I had hitherto continued to board with Godfrey, who, with his wife and children, occupied part of my house, and half the shop for his business, at which indeed he worked very little, being always absorbed by mathematics. Mrs. Godfrey formed a wish of marrying me to the daughter of one of her relations. She contrived various opportunities of bringing us together, till she saw that I was captivated,

which was not difficult, the lady in question possessing great personal merit. The parents encouraged my addresses, by inviting me continually to supper, and leaving us together, till at last it was time to come to an explanation. Mrs. Godfrey undertook to negotiate our little treaty. I gave her to understand that I expected to receive with the young lady a sum of money that would enable me at least to discharge the remainder of debt for my printing materials. It was then, I believe, not more than one hundred pounds. She brought me for answer, that they had no such sum at their disposal. I observed, that it might easily be obtained by a mortgage on their house. The reply to this was, after a few days

interval, that they did not approve of the match ; that they had consulted Bradford, and found that the business of a printer was not lucrative ; that my letters would soon be worn out, and must be supplied by new ones ; that Keimer and Harry had failed, and that, probably, I should do so too. Accordingly, he forbade me the house, and the young lady was confined. I know not if they had really changed their minds, or if it was merely an artifice, supposing our affections to be too far engaged to desist, and that we should contrive to marry secretly, which would leave them at liberty to give or not as they pleased. But suspecting this motive, I never went again to their house.

As a neighbour and an old acquaintance, I kept up a friendly intimacy with the family of Miss Read. Her parents retained an affection for me from the time of my lodging in their house. I was often invited thither, they consulted me about their affairs, and I had been sometimes serviceable to them. I was touched with the unhappy situation of their daughter, who was almost always melancholy, and continually seeking solitude. I regarded my forgetfulness and inconstancy, during my abode in London, as the principal cause of her misfortune, though her mother had the candour to attribute the fault to herself, rather than to me, because after having prevented our marriage previous to my departure,

she had induced her to marry another in my absence.

Our mutual affection revived, but there existed great obstacles to our union. Her marriage was considered, indeed, as not being valid, the man having, as it was said, a former wife still living in England; but of this it was difficult to obtain a proof at so great a distance; and though a report prevailed of his being dead, yet we had no certainty of it; and supposing it to be true, he had left many debts, for the payment of which his successor might be sued. We ventured, nevertheless, in spite of all these difficulties, and I married her on the first of September, 1730. None of the inconveniences we had feared happened to us. She proved to me

a good and faithful companion, and contributed essentially to the success of my shop. We prospered together, and it was our mutual study to render each other happy. Thus I corrected, as well as I could, this great error of my youth.

Our club was not at that time established at a tavern. We held our meetings at the house of Mr. Grace, who appropriated a room to the purpose. Some member observed, one day, that, as our books were frequently quoted in the course of our discussions, it would be convenient to have them collected in the room in which we assembled, in order to be consulted upon occasion; and that, by thus forming a common library of our individual collections, each would have the

advantage of using the books of all the other members, which would nearly be the same as if he possessed them all himself. The idea was approved, and we accordingly brought such books as we thought we could spare, which were placed at the end of the club-room. They amounted not to so many as we expected, and though we made considerable use of them, yet some inconveniences resulting from want of care, it was agreed, after about a year, to destroy the collection, and each took away such books as belonged to him. It was now that I first started the idea of establishing, by subscription, a public library. I drew up the proposals, had them ingrossed in form by Brockden the attorney, and my project succeeded.

[Thus far goes the narrative by the Doctor's own hand, and every reader of taste must be pleased with the frank ingenuity and beautiful simplicity of the writer. What follows was written by Dr. Stuber.]

THE promotion of literature had been little attended to in Pennsylvania. Most of the inhabitants were too much immersed in business to think of scientific pursuits, and those few whose inclinations led them to study, found it difficult to gratify them, from the want of sufficiently large libraries. In such circumstances, the establishment of a public library was an important event. This was first set on foot by Franklin, about the year 1731. Fifty persons subscribed forty shillings each, and agreed to pay ten shillings annually. The number increased, and in 1742 the com-



FRANKLIN PLANNING THE PHILADELPHIA LIBRARY.



pany was incorporated by the name of "The Library Company of Philadelphia." Several other companies were formed in this city, in imitation of it. These were all at length united with the Library Company of Philadelphia, which thus received a considerable accession of books and property. It now contains about nine thousand volumes, on all subjects, a philosophical apparatus, and a good beginning towards a collection of natural and artificial curiosities, besides landed property of considerable value. The company built an elegant house in Fifth street, in front of which is erected a marble statue of their founder, Benjamin Franklin.

• The beneficial effects of this in-

stitution were soon evident. The cheapness of terms rendered it accessible to every one. Its advantages were not confined to the opulent. The citizens in the middle and lower walks of life were equally partakers of them. Hence, a degree of information was extended amongst all classes of people which is very unusual in other places. The example was soon followed. Libraries were established in various places, and they are now become very numerous in the United States, and particularly in Pennsylvania. It is to be hoped that they will be still more widely extended, and that information will be everywhere increased. This will be the best security for maintaining our liberties. A nation of

well informed men, who have been taught to know and prize the rights which God has given them, cannot be enslaved. It is in the regions of Ignorance that Tyranny reigns. It flies before the light of Science. Let the citizens of America, then, encourage institutions calculated to diffuse knowledge amongst the people ; and, amongst these, public libraries are not the least important.

In 1732, Franklin began to publish *Poor Richard's Almanack*.—This was remarkable for the numerous and valuable concise maxims which it contained, all tending to exhort to industry and frugality. It was continued for many years. In the almanack for the last year, all the maxims were collected in

an address to the reader, entitled, *The Way to Wealth*. This has been translated into various languages, and inserted in different publications. This address contains perhaps, the best practical system of economy that ever has appeared. It is written in a manner intelligible to every one, and which cannot fail of convincing every reader of the justice and propriety of the remarks and advice which it contains. The demand for this almanack was so great, that ten thousand have been sold in one year, which must be considered as a very large number, especially when we reflect, that this country was, at that time, but thinly peopled. It cannot be doubted that the salutary maxims contained in these almanacks, must

have made a favourable impression upon many of the readers of them.

It was not long before Franklin entered upon his political career. In the year 1736, he was appointed Clerk to the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, and was re-elected by succeeding Assemblies for several years, until he was chosen a representative for the city of Philadelphia.

Bradford was possessed of some advantages over Franklin, by being postmaster, thereby having an opportunity of circulating his paper more extensively, and thus rendering it a better vehicle for advertisements, &c. Franklin, in his turn, enjoyed these advantages, by being appointed postmaster of Philadelphia, in 1737. Bradford, while in

office, had acted ungenerously towards Franklin, preventing, as much as possible, the circulation of his paper. He had now an opportunity of retaliating, but his nobleness of soul prevented him from making use of it.

There is nothing more dangerous to growing cities than fires. Other causes operate slowly, and almost imperceptibly ; but these, in a moment, render abortive the labours of years. On this account there should be, in all cities, ample provisions to prevent fires from spreading. Franklin early saw the necessity of these, and about the year 1738, formed the first fire company in this city. This example was soon followed by others, and there are now numerous fire companies in

the city and liberties. To these may be attributed, in a great degree, the activity in extinguishing fires, for which the citizens of Philadelphia are distinguished, and the inconsiderable damage which this city has sustained from this cause. Some time after, Franklin suggested the plan of an association for insuring houses from losses by fire, which was adopted, and the association continues to this day. The advantages experienced from it have been great.

Pursuits of a different nature now occupied the greatest part of Franklin's attention for some years. He engaged in a course of electrical experiments, with all the ardour and thirst for discovery which characterized the philosophers of

that day. Of all the branches of experimental philosophy, electricity had been least explored. The attractive power of amber is mentioned by Theophrastus and Pliny, and, from them, by later naturalists. In the year 1600, Gilbert, an English physician, enlarged considerably the catalogue of substances which have the property of attracting light bodies. Boyle, Otto Guericke, a burgomaster of Magdeburg, celebrated as the inventor of the air-pump, Dr. Wall, and Sir Isaac Newton, added some facts. Guericke first observed the repulsive power of electricity, and the light and noise produced by it. In 1709, Hawkesbee communicated some important observations and experiments to the world. For several

years electricity was entirely neglected, until Mr. Grey applied himself to it, in 1728, with great assiduity. He, and his friend Mr. Wheeler, made a great variety of experiments; in which they demonstrated that electricity may be communicated from one body to another, even without being in contact, and in this way may be conducted to a great distance. Mr. Grey afterwards found, that by suspending rods of iron by silk or hair lines, and bringing an excited tube under them, sparks might be drawn, and a light perceived at the extremities, in the dark. M. Du-Faye, intendant of the French King's gardens, made a number of experiments, which added not a little to the science. He made the

discovery of two kinds of electricity, which he called vitreous and resinous, the former produced by rubbing glass, the latter from excited sulphur, sealing-wax, &c. But this idea he afterwards gave up as erroneous. Between the years 1739 and 1742, Desaguliers made a number of experiments, but added little of importance. He first used the terms conductors and electrics *per se*. In 1742, several ingenious Germans engaged in this subject. Of these the principal were, Professor Boze, of Wittemburg—Professor Winkler, of Leipsic,—Gordon, a Scotch Benedictine monk, professor of philosophy at Erfurt—and Dr. Lunolf, of Berlin. The result of their researches astonished the philosophers of Europe. Their

apparatus was large, and by means of it they were enabled to collect large quantities of electricity, and thus to produce phenomena which had been hitherto unobserved. They killed small birds, and set spirits on fire. Their experiments excited the curiosity of other philosophers. Collinson, about the year 1745, sent to the Library Company of Philadelphia an account of these experiments, together with a tube, and directed how to use it. Franklin, with some of his friends, immediately engaged in a course of experiments, the result of which is well known. He was enabled to make a number of important discoveries, and to propose theories to account for various phenomena, which have been

universally adopted, and which bid fair to endure for ages. His observations he communicated in a series of letters to his friend Collinson, the first of which is dated the twenty-eighth of March, 1747. In these he makes known the power of points in drawing and throwing off the electrical matter, which had hitherto escaped the notice of electricians. He also made the grand discovery of a plus and minus, or of a positive and negative state of electricity. We give him the honour of this, without hesitation, although the English have claimed it for their countrymen, Dr. Watson. Watson's paper is dated January 21, 1748. Franklin's July 11, 1747, several months prior.

It was not until the summer of 1752, that he was enabled to complete his unparalleled discovery by experiment. The plan which he originally proposed, was to erect on some high tower, or other elevated place, a sentry-box, from which should rise a pointed iron rod, insulated by being fixed in a cake of resin. Electrified clouds passing over this would, he conceived, impart to it a portion of their electricity, which would be rendered evident to the senses by sparks being emitted, when a key, a knuckle, or other conductor was presented to it. Philadelphia, at this time, afforded no opportunity of trying an experiment of this kind. Whilst Franklin was waiting for the erection of a spire, it occurred to him,

that he might have more free access to the region of clouds by means of a common kite. He prepared one by attaching two cross sticks to a silk handkerchief, which would not suffer so much from the rain as paper. To his upright stick was affixed an iron point. The string was, as usual, of hemp, except the lower end, which was silk. Where the hempen string terminated, a key was fastened. With this apparatus, on the appearance of a thunder-gust approaching, he went out in the commons, accompanied by his son, to whom alone he communicated his intentions, well knowing the ridicule which, too generally for the interest of science, awaits unsuccessful experiments in philosophy. He placed



FRANKLIN'S ELECTRICAL EXPERIMENTS



himself under a shed to avoid the rain. His kite was raised—a thunder-cloud passed over it—no sign of electricity appeared—he almost despaired of success—when, suddenly, he observed the loose fibres of his string move towards an erect position. He now presented his knuckle to the key, and received a strong spark. How exquisite must his sensations have been at this moment! On this experiment depended the fate of his theory. If he succeeded, his name would rank high among those who have improved science; if he failed, he must be inevitably subject to the derision of mankind; or, what is worse, their pity, as a well-meaning man, but a weak, silly projector. The anxiety with which he looked

for the result of his experiment may easily be conceived. Doubts and despair had begun to prevail, when the fact was ascertained in so clear a manner, that even the most incredulous could not withhold their assent. Repeated sparks were drawn from the key, a phial was charged, a shock given, and all the experiments made which are usually performed with electricity. By these experiments, Franklin's theory was established in a most firm manner.

Although philosophy was a principal object of Franklin's pursuit for several years, he confined himself not to this. In the year 1747, he became a member of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, as a burgess for the city of Philadelphia.

Warm disputes at this time subsisted between the Assembly and the Proprietors, each contending for what they conceived to be their just rights. Franklin, a friend to the rights of man from his infancy, soon distinguished himself as a steady opponent of the unjust schemes of the Proprietors.

Dr. Franklin had conducted himself so well in the office of postmaster, and had shown himself to be so well acquainted with the business of that department, that it was thought expedient to raise him to a more dignified station. In 1753, he was appointed Deputy Postmaster General for the British Colonies. The profits arising from the postage of letters formed no inconsiderable part of the revenue

which the crown of Great Britain derived from these colonies.

The American colonies were much exposed to depredations on their frontiers by the Indians, and more particularly whenever a war took place between France and England. The colonies, individually, were either too weak to take efficient measures for their own defence, or they were unwilling to take upon themselves the whole burden of erecting forts and maintaining garrisons, whilst their neighbours, who partook equally with themselves of the advantages, contributed nothing to the expense. Sometimes also the disputes which subsisted between the governors and assemblies, prevented the adoption of means of defence, as

we have seen was the case in Pennsylvania in 1745. To devise a plan of union between the colonies, to regulate this and other matters, appeared a desirable object. To accomplish this, in the year 1754, commissioners from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, met at Albany. Dr. Franklin attended here, as a commissioner from Pennsylvania, and produced a plan, which, from the place of meeting, has been usually termed, "The Albany Plan of Union." This proposed, that application should be made for an act of Parliament, to establish in the colonies a general government, to be administered by a President-General, appointed by the crown,

and by a Grand Council, consisting of members chosen by the representatives of the different colonies, their number to be in direct proportion to the sums paid by each colony into the general treasury, with this restriction, that no colony should have more than seven, nor less than two representatives. The whole executive authority was committed to the president-general. The power of legislation was lodged in the grand council and president-general jointly, his consent being made necessary to passing a bill into a law. The powers vested in the president and council were, to declare war and peace, and to conclude treaties with the Indian nations, to regulate with, and to make purchases of vacant lands from

them, either in the name of the crown, or of the union ; to settle new colonies, to make laws for governing these until they should be erected into separate governments, and to raise troops, build forts, fit out armed vessels, and use other means for the general defence; and, to effect these things, a power was given to make laws, laying such duties, imposts, or taxes, as they should find necessary, and as would be least burthensome to the people. All laws were to be sent to England, for the king's approbation ; and, unless disapproved of within three years, were to remain in force. All officers in the land or sea-service were to be nominated by the president-general, and approved of by the general council ;

civil officers were to be nominated by the council, and approved by the president. Such are the outlines of the plan proposed for the consideration of the Congress by Dr. Franklin. After several days discussion, it was unanimously agreed to by the commissioners, a copy transmitted to each assembly, and one to the king's council. The fate of it was singular. It was disapproved of by the ministry of Great Britain, because it gave too much power to the representatives of the people; and it was rejected by every assembly, as giving too much power to the president-general, the representative of the crown, an influence greater than appeared to them proper in a plan of government intended for freemen. Per-

haps this rejection on both sides is the strongest proof that could be adduced of the excellence of it, as suited to the situation of America and Great Britain at that time. It appears to have steered exactly in the middle, between the opposite interests of both.

Whilst the French were in possession of Canada, their trade with the natives extended very far, even to the back of the British settlements. They were disposed, from time to time, to establish posts within the territory which the British claimed as their own. Independent of the injury to the fur trade, which was considerable, the colonies suffered this further inconvenience, that the Indians were frequently instigated to commit depredations on

their frontiers. In the year 1753, encroachments were made upon the boundaries of Virginia. Remonstrances had no effect. In the ensuing year, a body of men was sent out under the command of Mr. Washington, who, though a very young man, had by his conduct in the preceding year, shown himself worthy of such an important trust. Whilst marching to take possession of the post at the junction of the Alleghany and Monongahela, he was informed that the French had already erected a fort there. A detachment of their men marched against him. He fortified himself as strongly as time and circumstances would admit. A superiority of numbers soon obliged him to surrender Fort

Necessity. He obtained honourable terms for himself and his men, and returned to Virginia. The government of Great Britain now thought it necessary to interfere. In the year 1755, General Braddock, with some regiments of regular troops and provincial levies, was sent to dispossess the French of the posts upon which they had seized. After the men were all ready, a difficulty occurred, which had nearly prevented the expedition. This was the want of wagons. Franklin now stepped forward, and, with the assistance of his son, in a little time procured one hundred and fifty. Braddock unfortunately fell into an ambuscade, and perished, with a great number of his men.

The alarm spread through the

colonies, after the defeat of Braddock, was very great. Preparations to arm were everywhere made. In Pennsylvania, the prevalence of the Quaker interest prevented the adoption of any system of defence which would compel the citizens to bear arms. Franklin introduced into the assembly a bill for organizing a militia, by which every man was allowed to take arms or not, as to him should appear fit. The Quakers, being thus left at liberty, suffered the bill to pass; for, although their principles would not suffer them to fight, they had no objections to their neighbours fighting for them. In consequence of this act, a very respectable militia was formed. The sense of impending danger infused

a military spirit in all whose religious tenets were not opposed to war. Franklin was appointed colonel of a regiment in Philadelphia, which consisted of twelve hundred men.

The north-western frontier being invaded by the enemy, it became necessary to adopt measures for its defence. Franklin was directed by the governor to take charge of this business. A power of raising men, and of appointing officers to command them, was vested in him. He soon levied a body of troops, with which he repaired to the place at which their presence was necessary. Here he built a fort, and placed the garrison in such a posture of defence, as would enable them to withstand the inroads to which the

inhabitants had previously been exposed. He remained here for some time, in order the more completely to discharge the trust committed to him. Some business of importance at length rendered his presence necessary in the assembly, and he returned to Philadelphia.

The disputes between the proprietaries and the people continued in full force, although a war was raging on the frontiers. Not even the sense of danger was sufficient to reconcile, for ever so short a time, their jarring interest. The assembly still insisted upon the justice of taxing the proprietary estates; but the governors constantly refused to give their assent to this measure, without which no bill could pass into a law. Enraged

at the obstinacy, and what they conceived to be unjust proceedings of their opponents, the assembly at length determined to apply to the mother country for relief. A petition was addressed to the king in council, stating the inconveniences under which the inhabitants laboured, from the attention of the proprietaries to their private interest, to the neglect of the general welfare of the community, and praying for redress. Franklin was appointed to present this address, as agent for the province of Pennsylvania, and departed from America in June, 1757. In conformity to the instructions which he had received from the legislature, he held a conference with the proprietaries, who then resided in England,

and endeavoured to prevail upon them to give up the long-contested point. Finding that they would hearken to no terms of accommodation, he laid his petition before the council. During this time, Governor Denny assented to a law imposing a tax, in which no discrimination was made in favour of the Penn family. They, alarmed at this intelligence, and Franklin's exertions, used their utmost endeavours to prevent the royal sanction being given to this law, which they represented as highly iniquitous, designed to throw the support of government upon them, and calculated to produce the most ruinous consequences to them and their posterity. The cause was amply discussed before the privy council.

The Penns found here some strenuous advocates; nor were there wanting some who warmly espoused the side of the people. After some time spent in debate, a proposal was made, that Franklin should solemnly engage that the assessment of the tax should be so made, as that the proprietary estates should pay no more than a due proportion. This he agreed to perform; the Penn family withdrew their opposition, and tranquillity was thus once more restored to the province.

The mode in which this dispute was terminated is a striking proof of the high opinion entertained of Franklin's integrity and honour, even by those who considered him as inimical to their views. Nor was their confidence ill-founded.

The assessment was made upon the strictest principles of equity, and the proprietary estates bore only a proportionable share of the expenses of supporting government.

After the completion of this important business, Franklin remained at the court of Great Britain, as agent for the province of Pennsylvania. The extensive knowledge which he possessed of the situation of the colonies, and the regard which he always manifested for their interests, occasioned his appointment to the same office by the colonies of Massachusetts, Maryland, and Georgia. His conduct in this situation was such as rendered him still more dear to his countrymen.

He had now an opportunity of

indulging in the society of those friends whom his merits had procured him while at a distance. The regard which they had entertained for him was rather increased by a personal acquaintance. The opposition which had been made to his discoveries in philosophy, gradually ceased, and the rewards of literary merit were abundantly conferred upon him. The Royal Society of London, which had at first refused his performances admission into its transactions, now thought it an honour to rank him among its fellows. Other societies of Europe were equally ambitious of calling him a member. The university of St. Andrew's, in Scotland, conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws. Its example was followed

by the universities of Edinburgh and of Oxford. His correspondence was sought for by the most eminent philosophers of Europe. His letters to these abound with true science, delivered in the most simple, unadorned manner.

In the summer of 1762 he returned to America. On his passage he observed the singular effect produced by the agitation of a vessel containing oil floating on water. The surface of the oil remains smooth and undisturbed, whilst the water is agitated with the utmost commotion. No satisfactory explanation of this appearance has, we believe, ever been given.

Dr. Franklin received the thanks of the Assembly of Pennsylvania,

“as well for the faithful discharge of his duty to that province in particular, as for the many and important services done to America in general, during his residence in Great Britain.” A compensation of five thousand pounds, Pennsylvania currency, was also decreed him for his services during six years.

During his absence he had been annually elected member of the Assembly. On his return to Pennsylvania, he again took his seat in this body, and continued a steady defender of the liberties of the people.

At the election for a new Assembly, in the fall of 1764, the friends of the proprietaries made great exertions to exclude those of the ad-

verse party, and obtained a small majority in the city of Philadelphia. Franklin now lost his seat in the House, which he had held for fourteen years. On the meeting of the Assembly, it appeared that there was still a decided majority of Franklin's friends. He was immediately appointed provincial agent, to the great chagrin of his enemies, who made a solemn protest against his appointment, which was refused admission upon the minutes, as being unprecedented. It was, however, published in the papers, and produced a spirited reply from him, just before his departure for England.

The disturbances produced in America by Mr. Grenville's stamp-act, and the opposition made to it

are well known. Under the Marquis of Rockingham's administration, it appeared expedient to endeavour to calm the minds of the colonists, and the repeal of the odious tax was contemplated. Amongst other means of collecting information on the disposition of the people to submit to it, Dr. Franklin was called to the bar of the House of Commons. The examination which he here underwent was published, and contains a striking proof of the extent and accuracy of his information, and the facility with which he communicated his sentiments. He represented facts in so strong a point of view, that the inexpediency of the act must have appeared clear to every unprejudiced mind. The act, after

some opposition, was repealed about a year after it was enacted, and before it had ever been carried into execution. In 1776, he made a visit to Holland and Germany, and received the greatest marks of attention from men of science. In his passage through Holland, he learned from the watermen the effect which a diminution of the quantity of water in canals has in impeding the progress of boats. Upon his return to England, he was led to make a number of experiments, all of which tended to confirm the observation. These, with an explanation of the phenomenon, he communicated in a letter to his friend Sir John Pringle, which is contained in the volume of his philosophical pieces.

In the following year, he travelled into France, where he met with a no less favourable reception than he had experienced in Germany. He was introduced to a number of literary characters, and to the king, Louis XV.

Several letters, written by Hutchinson, Oliver, and others, to persons in eminent stations in Great Britain, came into the hands of Dr. Franklin. These contained the most violent invectives against the leading characters of the state of Massachusetts, and strenuously advised the prosecution of vigorous measures, to compel the people to obedience to the measures of the ministry. These he transmitted to the legislature, by whom they were published. Attested copies of them

were sent to Great Britain, with an address, praying the king to discharge from office persons who had shown themselves so unfriendly to their interests. The publication of these letters produced a duel between Mr. Wheatly and Mr. Temple, each of whom was suspected of having been instrumental in procuring them. To prevent any further disputes on the subject, Dr. Franklin, in one of the public papers, declared that he had sent them to America, but would give no information concerning the manner in which he had obtained them ; nor was this ever discovered.

Shortly after, the petition of the Massachusetts Assembly was taken up for examination, before the privy council. Dr. Franklin attended,

as agent for the Assembly ; and here a torrent of the most violent and unwarrantable abuse was poured upon him by the solicitor general, Wedderburne, (afterwards Lord Loughborough) who was engaged as counsel for Oliver and Hutchinson. The petition was declared to be scandalous and vexatious, and the prayer of it rejected.

Dr. Franklin left nothing untried to prevail upon the British ministry to consent to a change of measures. In private conversations, and in letters to persons in government, he continually expatiated upon the impolicy and injustice of their conduct towards America, and stated, that, notwithstanding the attachment of the colonists to the mother country, a repetition of ill treatment

must ultimately alienate their affections. They listened not to his advice. They blindly persevered in their own schemes, and left to the colonists no other alternative but opposition or unconditional submission. The latter accorded not with the principles of freedom which they had been taught to revere. To the former they were compelled, though reluctantly, to have recourse.

Dr. Franklin, finding all efforts to restore harmony between Great Britain and her colonies useless, returned to America in the year 1775, just after the commencement of hostilities. The day after his return, he was elected, by the legislature of Pennsylvania, a member of Congress. Not long after his

election, a committee was appointed, consisting of Mr. Lynch, Mr. Harrison, and himself, to visit the camp at Cambridge, and, in conjunction with the commander-in-chief, to endeavour to convince the troops, whose term of enlistment was about to expire, of the necessity of their continuing in the field, and persevering in the cause of their country.

In the fall of the same year, he visited Canada, to endeavour to unite them in the common cause of liberty ; but they could not be prevailed upon to oppose the measures of the British government. M. Le-Roy, in a letter annexed to Abbe Fauchet's eulogium of Dr. Franklin, states, that the ill success of this negotiation was occasioned, in

a great degree, by religious animosities, which subsisted between the Canadians and their neighbours, some of whom had, at different times, burnt their chapels.

When Lord Howe came to America, in 1776, vested with power to treat with the colonists, a correspondence took place between him and Dr. Franklin, on the subject of a reconciliation. Dr. Franklin was afterwards appointed, together with John Adams and Edward Rutledge, to wait upon the commissioners, in order to learn the extent of their power. These were found to be only to grant pardons upon submission. These were terms which would not be accepted, and the object of the commissioners could not be obtained.

The momentous question of independence was shortly after brought into view, at a time when the fleets and armies, which were sent to enforce obedience, were truly formidable. With an army ignorant of discipline, and entirely unskilled in the art of war; without money, without a fleet, without allies, and with nothing but the love of liberty to support them, the colonists determined to separate from a country from which they had experienced a repetition of injury and insult. In this question Dr. Franklin was decidedly in favour of the measure proposed, and had great influence in bringing over others to his sentiments.

The public mind had been pretty fully prepared for this event, by

Thomas Paine's celebrated pamphlet, *Common Sense*. There is good reason to believe that Dr. Franklin had no inconsiderable share, at least in furnishing materials for this work.

In the convention which assembled at Philadelphia, in 1776, for the purpose of establishing a new form of government for the state of Pennsylvania, Dr. Franklin was chosen President. The constitution then formed, which was the result of their deliberations, may be considered as a digest of his principles of government. The single legislature, and the plural executive, seem to have been his favourite tenets.

In the latter end of 1776, Dr. Franklin was appointed to assist in

the negotiations which had been set on foot by Silas Deane, at the court of France. A conviction of the advantages of a commercial intercourse with America, and a desire of weakening the British empire by dismembering it, first induced the French court to listen to proposals of an alliance. But they showed rather a reluctance to the measure, which, by Dr. Franklin's address, and particularly by the success of the American arms against General Burgoyne, was at length overcome, and in February 1778, a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, was concluded, in consequence of which France became involved in the war with Great Britain.

Perhaps no person could have

been found more capable of rendering essential services to the United States at the court of France than Dr. Franklin. He was well known as a philosopher, and his character was held in the highest estimation. He was received with the greatest marks of respect by all literary characters, and this respect was extended amongst all classes of men. His personal influence was hence very considerable. To the effects of this were added those of various performances which he published, tending to establish the credit and character of the United States. To his exertions in this way, may, in no small degree, be ascribed the success of the loans negotiated in Holland and France, which greatly con-

tributed to bringing the war to a happy conclusion.

The repeated ill success of their arms, and more particularly the capture of Cornwallis and his army, at length convinced the British nation of the impossibility of reducing the Americans to subjection. The trading interest particularly became clamorous for peace. The ministry were unable longer to oppose their wishes. Provisional articles of peace were agreed to, and signed at Paris, on the 30th of November, 1782, by Dr. Franklin, Mr. Adams, Mr. Jay, and Mr. Laurens, on the part of the United States; and by Mr. Oswald, on the part of Great Britain.

These formed the basis of the definitive treaty, which was con-

cluded the third of September, 1783, and signed by Dr. Franklin, Mr. Adams, and Mr. Jay, on the one part, and by Mr. David Hartley on the other.

On the third of April, 1783, a treaty of amity and commerce, between the United States and Sweden, was concluded at Paris by Dr. Franklin and the Count Von Kruitiz.

Dr. Franklin did not allow his political pursuits to engross his whole attention. Some of his performances made their appearance in Paris. The object of these was, generally, the promotion of industry and economy.

The important ends of Dr. Franklin's mission being completed by the establishment of American Independence, and the infirmities

of age and disease coming upon him, he became desirous of returning to his native country. Upon application to Congress to be recalled, Mr. Jefferson was appointed to succeed him, in 1785. Some time in September of the same year, Dr. Franklin arrived in Philadelphia. He was, shortly after, chosen member of the Supreme Executive Council for the city, and soon after was elected president of the same.

When a convention was called to meet in Philadelphia, in 1787, for the purpose of giving more energy to the government of the union, by revising and amending the articles of confederation; Dr. Franklin was appointed a delegate from the state of Pennsylvania.

He signed the constitution which they proposed for the union, and gave it the most unequivocal marks of his approbation.

Dr. Franklin's increasing infirmities prevented his regular attendance at the council-chamber; and in 1788, he retired wholly from public life.

His constitution had been a remarkably good one. He had been little subject to disease, except an attack of the gout, occasionally, until about the year 1781, when he was first attacked with symptoms of the calculous complaint, which continued during his life. During the intervals of pain from this grievous disease, he spent many cheerful hours, conversing in the most agreeable and instructive man-

ner. His faculties were entirely unimpaired, even to the hour of his death.

In the beginning of April following, he was attacked with a fever and complaint of his breast, which terminated his existence. The following account of his last illness was written by his friend and physician Dr. Jones.

“The stone, with which he had been afflicted for several years, had, for the last twelve months, confined him chiefly to his bed; and during the extreme painful paroxysms, he was obliged to take large doses of laudanum to mitigate his tortures—still, in the intervals of pain, he not only amused himself with reading and conversing cheerfully with his family, and a

few of his friends who visited him, but was often employed in doing business of a public as well as private nature, with various persons who waited on him for that purpose ; and in every instance displayed not only that readiness and disposition of doing good, which was the distinguishing characteristic of his life, but the fullest and clearest possession of his uncommon mental abilities, and not unfrequently indulged himself in those *juex d'esprit* and entertaining anecdotes, which were the delight of all who heard him.

“ About sixteen days before his death, he was seized with a feverish indisposition, without any particular symptoms attending it, till the third or fourth day, when he complained

of a pain in his left breast, which increased till it became extremely acute, attended with a cough, and laborious breathing. During this state, when the severity of his pains drew forth a groan of complaint, he would observe, that he was afraid he did not bear them as he ought—acknowledged his grateful sense of the many blessings he had received from the Supreme Being, who had raised him, from small and low beginnings, to such high rank and consideration among men—and made no doubt but his present afflictions were kindly intended to wean him from a world in which he was no longer fit to act the part assigned him. In this frame of body and mind he continued till five days before his death,

when his pain and difficulty of breathing entirely left him, and his family were flattering themselves with the hopes of his recovery, when an imposthumation, which had formed itself in his lungs, suddenly burst, and discharged a great quantity of matter, which he continued to throw up while he had sufficient strength to do it; but as that failed, the organs of respiration became gradually oppressed—a calm, lethargic state succeeded, and, on the seventeenth of April, 1790, about eleven o'clock at night, he quietly expired, closing a long and useful life of eighty-four years and three months.

The following epitaph on himself was written by him many years previous to his death :

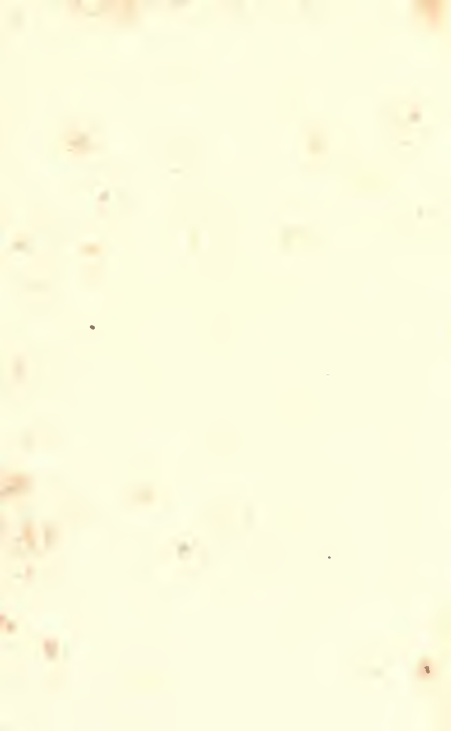
THE BODY
OF
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,
PRINTER,

Like the Cover of an old Book,
Its Contents torn out,
And stript of its Lettering and Gilding,
Lies here Food for Worms.

Yet the Work itself shall not be lost,
For it will (as he believed) appear once more
In a new and more beautiful Edition,
Corrected and Amended

by
THE AUTHOR.

THE END.

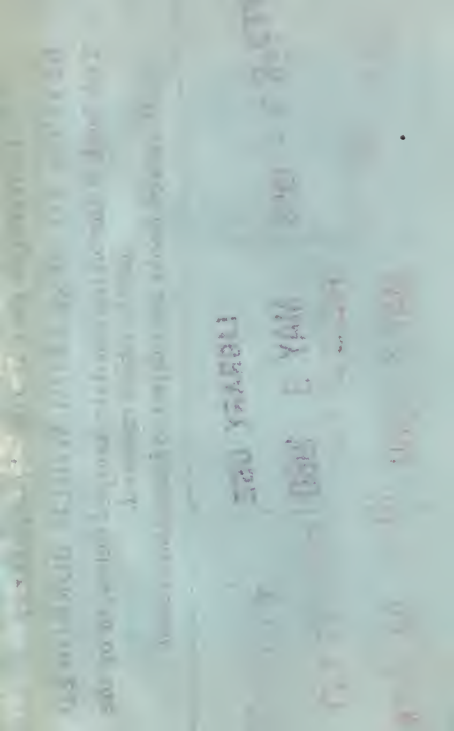












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